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President: Mr. Razali Ismail . . . . . (Malaysia)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Samhan (United Arab Emirates), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3:05 p.m.

Agenda item 47

Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters

The Acting President (*interpretation from Arabic*): In connection with the item before the Assembly, I should like to remind members that at its 126th plenary meeting of the fiftieth session, held on 16 September 1996, the General Assembly decided that the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council should continue its work, taking into account the progress achieved during the forty-eighth, forty-ninth and fiftieth sessions and the views expressed during the fifty-first session of the Assembly, and should submit a report to the Assembly of its fifty-first session, including any agreed recommendations.

Mr. Zlenko (Ukraine): It may be recalled that the representative of Ukraine was the last speaker in the debate on this agenda item at the fiftieth session of the General Assembly. Today, at the fifty-first session, we have the honour to open the discussion on the same subject, which is the backbone of the issue of United Nations reform. It shows that we have a sincere interest in and are not indifferent to the fate of the United Nations today and in the future.

It is the view of our delegation that a revitalized and reformed United Nations would be impossible without a more representative and open Security Council. Delays in resolving this important matter impair the United Nations ability to respond adequately to the challenges of the present and to enhance the Organization's prestige in contemporary international relations.

The delegation of Ukraine shares the view that, notwithstanding the absence of sound positive results, the previous session of the General Assembly was the most successful so far in the deliberations of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council.

Now, at least, we have a better picture of what is not acceptable to Member States among the schemes to expand the Security Council. The addition of only two countries to permanent membership in the future Council has clearly been ruled out by the Working Group. Equally, the permanent members of the Security Council are not ready to agree to any change in the status of the veto.

Unfortunately, such an outcome is not enough to form the basis for an agreement that could bring us to a breakthrough in resolving the issue.

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What makes the work of the Working Group so ineffective and not focus-oriented?

In our opinion, we are sitting too long at the starting line in the presentation of our national positions. Three years after the Working Group was created, we have not even entered the stage of negotiations. Although there have been a lot of interesting proposals, they have not received adequate responses from delegations. Even the most thorough proposal, that of Italy, does not enjoy even the basic understanding by members of some of its most appealing elements.

In this context, the delegation of Ukraine proposes to restructure the discussions in the Working Group towards initiating an unbiased and thorough debate on each of the proposals presented by Member States. We hope that such an option will help to determine both the merits and the shortcomings of the proposals and will use the constructive elements in the further work of the Working Group.

Another negative factor in our discussion, which we cannot help but mention, is the vague positions of the permanent members of the Security Council, who often prefer to make hints instead of speaking straight. This uncertainty, as we see it, can only be interpreted as an unwillingness to accept any change in the present status of the Security Council. If that is the case, we can only express our regret.

To know better the position of the five on the issue of equitable representation on and the increase in the membership of the Security Council and on other related matters, we would like to request the Secretariat to prepare a working paper that would reflect the relevant positions of the permanent members of the Security Council on all aforementioned issues. We believe that such a paper will be very helpful to many of us, if not to all.

Serious concerns have emerged in connection with certain statements concerning the decision-making process in the Open-ended Working Group. The failure to achieve tangible results is attributed by some to the principle of consensus which we apply here. The delegation of Ukraine avails itself of this opportunity to state clearly that any other way of adopting a decision on the expansion of the Security Council will have the most negative consequences, both political and material, for the future of this Organization. A refusal of the permanent members to support and then to ratify the amendments to the Charter could result in unpredictable political implications as far as the implementation of Security Council resolutions is concerned.

The self-imposed rule of consensus serves our Group as an effective guarantor against such an unfavourable development of events and, in the long run, as a guarantee of the preservation of our Organization as a viable instrument for maintaining international peace and security.

Do we have the potential to reach a compromise? The delegation of Ukraine has no doubts about this. The most persuasive proof to this effect is presented in the report of the Open-ended Working Group. For the first time in three years, the Member States agreed on a substantial part of it, notwithstanding all the differences that still remain.

In our opinion, we should turn to the basic conceptual principle of negotiations: either to negotiate about the goal and reach an agreement or to negotiate about positions and find ourselves on a dead-end street. My delegation believes that we should take step-by-step decisions, each of which would facilitate the adoption of the next one.

At this stage, we believe, the least controversial issue is the number of seats in the expanded Security Council. Using the principle of the lowest common denominator, the Working Group could have taken a decision to expand the Council to 25 or 26 members. My delegation put forward this proposal during the work of our Working Group and would like to reaffirm that it is still on the negotiating table.

One of the positive aspects of such a decision lies in its confidence-building potential. Once assured that the interests of all regional groups have been met, Member States, not afraid of being overwhelmed, would be more inclined to reach an agreement. At the same time, this would make further negotiations more parameter-oriented.

My delegation would like to stress that any expansion of the Security Council should take into account the legitimate interests of the Eastern European regional group, which has more than doubled its membership in recent years. We note with satisfaction that this idea has found its place in the report of the Open-ended Working Group to the General Assembly.

Another basic pillar of the work of the Group should be the strict and faithful observance of the fundamental principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations. That is why my delegation is not in a position to support the application of the important principle of equitable geographical distribution to the category of permanent members of the Security Council. The new permanent members, if there should be any, should be chosen on an ad hoc basis, as stipulated by the Charter. Thus, any State which is individually capable of assuming primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security and whose candidature is acceptable at both the regional and global levels can become a permanent member of the Security Council through the relevant procedure.

In this context, we think that only Germany and Japan meet the criteria. Ukraine supports the desire of these countries to acquire permanent membership of the Security Council. This process should be accompanied by an increase in the number of non-permanent members, due regard being specially paid, *inter alia*, to equitable geographical distribution.

The goal of the expansion of the Security Council is to make it more representative and balanced and its work more effective and transparent. Obviously, current realities should be properly taken into account. The principle of balance does not permit one group to dominate the other groups of States and encourages States to seek cooperation and agreement in resolving problems. In our opinion, balance in the composition of the Security Council can be reached by an increase in the number of non-permanent members, primarily from the developing countries.

Ukraine believes that, if two additional seats for permanent members in the Security Council are created, the number of non-permanent members should be increased by eight, which would make a total of 18 non-permanent members. The additional seats for non-permanent members could be distributed as follows: four seats for Asian and African countries; two seats for the regional group of Latin American and Caribbean countries; one seat for the regional group of Western European and other countries; and one seat for the regional group of Eastern European countries.

Thus, the Ukrainian proposal may be defined by the formula "2+8". Through our proposal, we can achieve a balance by increasing the representation of developing countries in the Security Council to 13. If the current decision-making procedure is retained, the approval of a decision in the enlarged Council would require 15 votes in favour, provided that none of the permanent members votes against. With 13 votes, the developing countries would have an effective group veto, without leaving the veto as the prerogative of any one State.

As to the status of these new non-permanent seats, Ukraine supports a well-known proposal by Italy. At the same time, to accommodate the interests of small countries, the following modification might be considered. First, regional groups might be given the right to determine how many seats — except one that would stay under the regular two-year rotation rule — would be used for frequent rotation. Secondly, the regional groups might be permitted to use their non-permanent seats — except one that would stay under the regular two-year rotation rule — on a one-year rotation basis.

The position of Ukraine on the veto issue is well known. We consider the existence of the power of veto, under present political realities, to be unjustified. In the framework of the Open-ended Working Group, our delegation voiced its support for the idea of the so-called "diluted veto", as well as for restricted implementation of the veto by the Security Council permanent members. In our opinion, these modifications could have limited the opportunities of the permanent members to use the veto only in their own national interests, to the detriment of the interests of the international community as a whole. But one has to be a realist. We do understand that only the permanent members themselves can abolish or at least modify the right to veto.

In this context, we believe that a speedy solution to the question of the expansion of the Security Council in order to balance its membership will contribute to the voluntary limitation of the use of veto by the permanent members.

The so-called Cluster II issues are an indispensable part of the Security Council reform, but we are deeply convinced that they should not be held hostage to the main issue of enlarging the Council or depend on how that issue will be resolved. My delegation assesses positively all the changes that have occurred in the working methods and procedures of the Security Council and considers it necessary to consolidate them.

Unfortunately, "common sense", as Voltaire once said, "is not so common"; that holds true in the work of our Working Group. Quite often, we see that wisdom

yields to political ambition, thus complicating an issue which is vital for the very existence of our Organization. My delegation strongly believes that, if we want to get along, we have to meet with dignity the new demands and the new challenges facing this Organization and each of its Member States.

Mr. Sucharipa (Austria): The General Assembly is considering the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council for the fourth time without, I am afraid, any immediate solution within reach. This fact calls for an urgent reassessment of the objectives contained in resolution 48/26, the basis of our reform exercise.

We have decided to speak early in this year's debate on agenda item 47 not because our immediate national interests are at stake, but because Austria has a long-lasting tradition of supporting a strong United Nations. The issue before us is closely related to our desire to see a healthier Organization getting prepared for the challenges of the next century.

With the adoption of resolution 48/26, the General Assembly recognized the need to review the membership of the Security Council: first, in view of the substantial increase in the membership of the United Nations, especially from developing countries; and secondly, in view of the substantial changes in international relations.

At the founding of the United Nations, the ratio of the overall membership of the United Nations to the membership of the Security Council was roughly 6:1. After the 1965 enlargement it was 8:1. The process of decolonization has brought it up to about 12:1. It seems obvious, therefore, that the large increase in the overall membership of the United Nations has to be reflected in the composition of the Security Council, taking into account the criterion of equitable geographical representation. The need for an efficient Council, however, imposes numerical limits. The Working Group unanimously agreed on these principles.

Pursuant to a widely shared view, the current structure of the Council does not reflect the international political and economic changes of recent decades. The Security Council, bearing the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, no longer represents the universality and plurality of its mandators, that is the members of the General Assembly. Lack of representation engenders lack of legitimacy; hence the urgency for Security Council reform.

A large number of Member States highly value the merits of the concept of cohabitation and cooperation between permanent and non-permanent membership as it has evolved over the last five decades. While these countries — and I count Austria among them — favour a balanced enlargement in these existing categories, others concentrate their reform proposals *inter alia* on a modified model for non-permanent membership.

If the reform process is to succeed, we must break out of this well-known dilemma of our discussions in the Open-ended Working Group. And, if I may refer to the statement we have just heard by our colleague from Ukraine, what he proposed could be a step in this direction. At this stage my delegation would like to pay a special tribute to Ambassador Fredrik Wilhelm Breitenstein of Finland and to Ambassador Asda Jayanama of Thailand for their patience and untiring efforts as Vice-Chairmen of the Working Group.

Although the deliberations during the fiftieth session of the General Assembly were substantial, lack of progress persisted, which threatens to turn our serious and ambitious efforts into a "never-ending story". On the occasion of last year's Special Commemorative Meeting of the General Assembly, as well as during this year's general debate, an impressive number of Member States expressed their deep commitment to multilateralism, and to a strong and vital United Nations able to contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security in the twenty-first century.

The overall reform process aimed at restructuring and revitalizing, modernizing and updating the Organization in order to equip it for future challenges has to be finally brought to a conclusion. The Security Council cannot be an exception. Reform of the Council is a key element in the overall reform process. Let us, therefore, redouble our efforts in the search for "general agreement" on the reform of the Council as stipulated in the preambular part of resolution 48/26, and let us find the necessary flexibility to meet that goal.

We believe that the following points could constitute the parameters for such general agreement: for reasons of efficiency, any enlargement should not exceed a total of 25 members. In order to safeguard effectiveness, enlargement should take full account of the reality and pluralistic nature of today's world and satisfy the need for equitable geographical representation.

The concept of permanent combined with non-permanent, or elected, membership can provide the necessary continuity in the Security Council's work and an appropriate reflection of the structure of international relations. It can safeguard necessary democratic elements to ensure to a sufficient degree the necessary representative nature of the Council.

Criteria for the choice of permanent members must be political and economic realities, global constructive engagement of the potential candidates, and their capacity and willingness to contribute in an appropriate fashion to the maintenance of international peace and security, in particular through participation in and support of peacekeeping operations. These are general criteria with worldwide relevance. The principle of equitable geographical representation is relevant as well.

For the election of non-permanent members — again based on the principle of geographical representation — the current criteria listed in Article 23 (1) of the Charter should continue to apply.

And, finally, the veto should be limited in scope and in use.

The goal of legitimacy and efficiency for the Security Council not only calls for a higher degree of formalized representation, but also for increased interaction between the members and non-members of the Council. My delegation welcomes the improvements undertaken by the Council in the last two years towards better access to information, *inter alia* in the context of United Nations peacekeeping, and we ask all of its present and future members to assure an appropriate and consistent follow-up to these initial steps. These improvements have to be considered a result of the proposals and debates in the framework of the General Assembly Working Group.

The increase in access to information ought to be supplemented by similar improvements in the possibilities for significant interaction between members and non-members of the Council. Whenever necessary, the views of non-members, especially those immediately concerned with questions dealt with in the Council, should be heard and their articulation encouraged. Here again we have seen progress in recent years, and we hope that this trend will continue.

As a final point, let me stress the importance Austria attaches to efforts aimed at redressing the political imbalance between the General Assembly and the Security Council. Increased relevance of the General Assembly in the decision-making of this Organization is a crucial and essential element of United Nations reform. This goal needs to be pursued with utmost vigour.

To this effect, the proceedings of the General Assembly need to be streamlined. We welcome the first steps in this direction under the leadership of the President of the Assembly.

The Acting President (*interpretation from Arabic*): Before calling on the next speaker, I should like to propose that the list of speakers in the debate on this item be closed today at 5 p.m.

If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the General Assembly agrees to that proposal.

It was so decided.

Mr. Eitel (Germany): The President of the General Assembly will also preside over the deliberations of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council during the fifty-first session. I wish him and the two Vice-Chairmen of the Working Group, Ambassador Wilhelm Breitenstein and Ambassador Asda Jayanama, good luck in their difficult task. We are glad to see the two Vice-Chairmen again on the job.

Let me begin with a metaphor. For almost four years the United Nations reform train has been waiting in the United Nations central station on the East River to be repaired and overhauled. Passengers outside, in the United Nations country, are waiting for the train to depart and arrive at destinations called Peace and Security, Development, Human Rights and Environmental Protection. They are waiting in places that suffer from internal conflicts, places still marked by poverty or lack of democracy and human rights, and places threatened by destruction of or serious damage to their environment. The United Nations train is the only train in the world that can reach those places.

The train needs competent staff as well as a strong engine in which Member States have confidence. We must therefore replace the old steam locomotive made in 1945 with an up-to-date model engine that pulls the train forward and is, at the same time, easily controlled and adapted to the needs of the passengers waiting at the various stations.

Where do we stand today in our discussion? And second, where do we go from here?

With regard to my first question, in the view of Germany and many other countries, we are ready for concrete negotiations on the reform of the Security Council. The latest report of the Working Group of 13 September 1996 includes all the elements necessary for a reform package, which are the following.

The first element is greater transparency in the working methods of the Security Council, in particular better information for non-members of the Security Council, consultations with present and potential troop-contributing countries and the participation of non-members of the Council in its discussions. During its presidency of the Security Council in August 1996, Germany held extensive daily briefings and several open formal meetings of the Security Council, allowing a broad flow of information between members and non-members of the Security Council. Statements were also made by an observer country and an organization with observer status in a public debate of the Security Council. As President of one of the Sanctions Committees, I gave briefings on its work throughout the year.

The second element is enlargement of both categories of membership, permanent as well as non-permanent. During the last general debate, many Member States referred to Germany as a possible new permanent member. We are grateful for this support, and I wish to express my thanks also to my Ukrainian colleague, who has just "spoken straight". Germany continues to stress that a reform should also provide for permanent membership for the South, that is, three seats for Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean, all together. Together with new non-permanent seats, the overall size of a future Security Council should be between 23 and 26, preferably 24. The recent discussions have focused on how to determine who should have access to the three new permanent seats for the South. In this context, we have noticed that quite a number of Member States who have expressed support for the creation of new permanent seats have also mentioned the Italian proposal. This may be understood as a desire to combine the principles of permanent regional representation and rotation, leading to permanent regional rotating seats. This is one possible solution to the problem of selecting permanent members from the three regions I mentioned.

The third element entails adapting the decision-making procedures to the new size and composition of an enlarged and reformed Security Council. The report of the Working Group includes several proposals to this effect which deserve our interest and attention. The German position regarding the so-called action threshold and the veto are well known. It is evident, however, that the scope and configuration of these decision-making procedures are dependent on the political role of the new Security Council. Thus, progress in this area will not only require creative thinking and close negotiation but will also be possible only after the other reform aspects have been resolved.

The fourth and last element is a periodic review. Several countries have proposed a re-examination or a periodical review of the new composition of the Security Council as part of an overall agreement. Germany, in this context, has presented a proposal for a periodic review clause (A/50/47, annex XIV), the details of which are known to participants. The general purpose of this proposal is twofold: to guarantee that neither the increase in membership nor the new composition of the Security Council is irreversible, and thus to facilitate the decision for reform now.

This is where we stand today. Several reform proposals are on the table. Where do we go from here?

First, we must prepare a Security Council reform package based on the now existing proposals. After excluding the proposals that have been proven to be too unrealistic or that have provoked only obvious silence on the part of the membership, the remaining proposals should merge into a reform package on which a general agreement of the membership can be reached.

Secondly, progress will only be possible by way of concrete political negotiation. While the Working Group will continue its work, the membership must remain mindful of the reform mandate and enter into concrete negotiations that lead to decisions. These decisions will have to be taken according to the provisions and requirements for amendments stipulated in the Charter. All of us will work for the largest possible majority, but it would be unrealistic to expect decisions on the basis of a 100 per cent consensus.

Thirdly, we must not forget other reform areas. The financial situation of the United Nations, the Agenda for Development, the Agenda for Peace and the strengthening of the United Nations system as a whole are equally at the centre of ongoing reform efforts. Germany shares the view of other countries that the lack

of tangible progress with regard to the reform of the Security Council

> "has an adverse effect on the negotiations on all other aspects of the Organization's future activities." *(A/50/47/Add. l, annex XVIII, para. 1)*

Fourthly, the time to act is now. Let me quote the outgoing President of the General Assembly and previous Chairman of the Working Group, Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral:

> "[The] Member States ... now must deliver.... The issues cannot just be endlessly debated. There must be action, and there must be action soon." *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Plenary Meetings, 128th meeting, p. 7)*

The General Assembly, with its principle of one State, one vote, will have the final word on the composition, transparency and effectiveness of the United Nations train into the twenty-first century, on its destinations and on its schedule.

The passengers have been waiting long enough.

Mr. Amorim (Brazil): I should like to start by thanking Ambassadors Breitenstein and Jayanama for their competent Vice-Chairmanship during the past year of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council, and by placing on record our appreciation of the leadership provided by Professor Freitas do Amaral as President of the General Assembly at its fiftieth session. We are convinced that our current President, Ambassador Razali Ismail, will contribute his well-known dynamism and lucidity to our future work.

The Working Group continues to inspire heated debates and stimulate profound reflection on an issue that is central to the future of the Organization. The Working Group's report to the General Assembly at its fiftieth session can be described as a satisfactory summary of its recent activity, even though, given the rule of consensus, it understandably omits important details and falls short of reflecting certain trends. It nevertheless stands as a useful tool to enable work to proceed towards a widely acceptable blueprint for equitable Council reform.

As the Brazilian Minister for External Relations, Luiz Felipe Lampreia, stated in the general debate,

> "There is a virtual consensus that the Security Council should be enlarged to allow for greater participation by countries with the capacity to act on a global scale and the willingness to bear the responsibilities that would entail. We must now set a course for this process. Its outcome is essential for strengthening the United Nations." *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-first Session, Plenary Meetings, 4th meeting, p. 4)*

At the same time, we share with many a sense of disappointment at the General Assembly's inability to go further than it did during its fiftieth session in setting the stage for Security Council reform. The United Nations cannot face the future with confidence as long as the composition of the organ with primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security is not made equitable and representative.

Reference has been made here to the fact that the Charter does not speak of equitable geographic distribution in dealing with the issue of permanent members. However, if we consider the work of those who wrote the Charter in 1945, we must conclude that they also had in mind the idea of equitable geographic distribution. Since most of Africa was at that time still under colonial rule, Latin America was the only region that was excluded — the result of a specific fact to which I may refer on another occasion.

We must be wary of the risks involved in failing to act. But we must be even more careful not to mistake the need for equitable representation in an expanded Security Council with forms of expansion that will make it neither representative nor equitable and that, instead of taking us closer to those objectives, may, on the contrary, lead us in the opposite direction.

The Working Group has already reached the conclusion that

> "In the event that there is agreement for an increase in the permanent membership, an increase only by industrialized countries would be widely regarded as unacceptable". *(A/50/47, para. 26)*

However, despite the fact that this conclusion may be taken as a welcome sign of wisdom, other ideas are still lurking in the background — sometimes even in the foreground — which, though disguised, would have the same practical effect of aggravating the existing imbalance.

Prolonged discussions in the Working Group exposed the inherent flaws in proposals that conceived of a regional process for the selection of permanent members from some quarters while exempting two industrialized countries from the same type of selection procedure. The attempted justification for such ideas remains unconvincing. It is said, for example, that there seems to be a lack of agreement in three regions with regard to who should occupy the corresponding permanent seats. Nothing is said of the regional situation of the two particular industrialized countries, although some of the strongest opposition to the idea of permanent membership is to be found precisely in their parts of the world.

In our view, the concept of "equitable representation" certainly encompasses the idea of equitable geographic or regional representation. However, it also has other connotations. A body of such limited composition and wide-ranging powers as the Security Council must be perceived as legitimate, and for that to be the case it must include, as permanent members, a sample of Member States that is broadly seen as representative of different perspectives.

We believe that the regional component must be kept in mind in any plan for reform, but not as a pretext for establishing inequities at the outset of the reform process, in contravention of our very mandate. The selective application of regional procedures for identifying new permanent members, to which I have just referred, is a case in point.

Logically, the so-called regional permanent seat — whether as its rotating variant or in some other guise — might have an operational meaning in parts of the world where integration in the fields of foreign policy and defence has advanced substantially. However, if the one region of the world where this is already happening does not feel ready to embrace the regional permanent seat for itself, it is doubtful whether there is a legitimate basis for encouraging others to do so.

Furthermore, care should be taken not to confound the informal regional groupings of the United Nations system with regional bodies in the field of international affairs. Let us not forget that the establishment of a common foreign or security policy only comes about, if at all, as one of the last stages in any process of regional integration. Perhaps we will head towards an interregional world with a higher standard of understanding among Governments and peoples in the future; that is certainly desirable. If — or when — that happens, a revision of the basis for representation in the Security Council would be in order. However, for the time being, the truth is that we still live and work in an inter-State world — at least as far as cooperation for the maintenance of peace and security is concerned. The current permanent members of the Security Council have given no indication whatsoever that they think otherwise.

It is impossible to discuss last year's report without taking due note of the wide support expressed in the Working Group for proposals to limit the scope and use of the veto. We sympathize with many such proposals, in particular those submitted by countries of the Non-Aligned Movement, and with the interesting suggestions by the delegations of Uruguay and Mexico referred to in paragraph 31 of document A/50/47. At the same time, we recognize that these proposals have met with some resistance, in particular on the part of the existing permanent members.

In Working Group discussions I alluded to an idea that I believe could help to discourage resort to the veto without abridging the current rights of permanent members. This would allow permanent members to cast negative votes in the same way as non-permanent members cast them: without blocking decisions. Were the Council's permanent members granted such a faculty, it would offer new possibilities for self-restraint, not by limiting their prerogatives but by giving them an additional option that, strictly speaking, they do not enjoy. They would still be entitled to vote in favour of or to abstain on a resolution, or to veto it. But in addition, they would be entitled to vote against without vetoing, in the same way as the non-permanent members have done for more than 50 years. It would be like allowing someone who is used to being chauffeur-driven around town in a comfortable private limousine the right to use public transportation. It could not do any harm, and would probably have some constructive repercussions. This idea is certainly not a panacea, and does not address all concerns, but it may be worth considering.

To my delegation, as well as to many others involved in the deliberations of the Open-ended Working Group, the democratization of the United Nations stands out as a priority. If the Security Council is to shape a peaceful world order capable of honouring the principles of the Charter, its decisions must be perceived as legally sound and politically wise. Its work must meet the required standards of accountability expected of governmental institutions in democratic regimes. The global responsibilities entrusted to the permanent and

non-permanent members of the Council cannot be subject to narrow-mindedness.

These considerations apply to all the Council's activities, but acquire greater significance with respect to the authorization of coercive measures, even when they do not involve the use of force. The political nature of the Council's work does not entitle it to treat considerations of a legal nature with laxity. The need for urgent action cannot justify persistent improvisation. The time has perhaps come for a critical assessment of Council action since the end of the cold war, with a view to identifying the cases where decisions did not contribute to preserving the credibility of the United Nations, as well as to looking at alternative approaches capable not only of preserving but, if possible, enhancing the Organization's image as an impartial broker for peace. In this context, discussions such as the ones pursued in the General Assembly on the Supplement to "An Agenda for Peace" can be considered a healthy exercise to be further stimulated.

The President of the International Court of Justice, Judge Mohammed Bedjaoui, has made an important contribution in this regard, in his book entitled *The New World Order and the Security Council: Testing the Legality of its Acts*. We concur in particular with his prescription for future Council activity when he states that:

> "The task is to subject the use of force to ever more rigorous discipline, to confirm and develop the rules which fortify just recourse to it, to eliminate the practices which lead it astray and to endow such recourse with the respect and recognition it inevitably arouses when it serves to found order upon justice." *(The New World Order and the Security Council: Testing the Legality of its Acts, Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1995, page 6)*

We need an Organization with a balanced and solid institutional architecture. The relationship between the General Assembly, a restructured Security Council and a revitalized Economic and Social Council is of fundamental importance as we become increasingly aware of the mutually reinforcing interlinkage between peace, development and democracy in all its aspects. The International Court of Justice is also an essential part of our edifice. A number of questions related to peace and security do not fit exclusively within the Security Council's area of competence. They can be treated either elsewhere or in cooperation with other organs. The General Assembly, in particular, should be in close touch with the Council's activity. As a small step in that direction, I would suggest that the President of the General Assembly be invited to participate in the monthly luncheon given by the President of the Security Council for the Permanent Representatives of Council members along with the Secretary-General.

In an article published last month, Mr. Paul Kennedy, a British historian working at Yale University commented that:

> "The end of the cold war has made much of world politics unfamiliar, messy and difficult to assess".

But he also argued that the challenges facing the world today are not really greater than those confronting world leaders in the chaos of 1945. He concluded that the world is in need of leadership and that world leaders should have the foresight to make the Security Council representative. His article only provides us with one more incentive to continue to participate actively in the promotion of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council, as an indispensable element in the effort to strengthen multilateralism as part of our larger endeavour to build a United Nations capable of facing the challenges of the twenty-first century.

Mr. Fulci (Italy): Allow me to start with a brief sketch of where we stand after three years of deliberations on the question of the expansion of the Security Council. First of all, there will be no quick fix. Everyone, including its potential beneficiaries, agrees that the quick fix has no future. As for the "2+3" proposal, it would be extremely difficult if not impossible to select one African, one Asian, and one Latin American or Caribbean country for a permanent seat. Moreover, one of the permanent members has already made it abundantly clear that it would block any Charter amendment granting the veto to developing countries.

This leaves us with three main options: first, the "2+3 regional permanent rotating seats" and its variants; secondly, the Italian proposal to establish 10 new non-permanent seats for the more frequent rotation of 30 countries to be chosen by the General Assembly; and thirdly, the fall-back position of the Non-Aligned Movement to increase only non-permanent seats, for the time being, in case no agreement is reached on other categories of membership. Let us look at these options one by one.

The first formula, "2+3 regional permanent rotating seats" ran into some lively opposition when it was discussed last spring in the Open-ended Working Group. Some representatives dubbed it a quick fix by the back door. To me, it looked like a Trojan horse: open it up, and out jump two new permanent members, Germany and Japan. We were also brought back to our logical senses on this particular point by our Brazilian colleague, who spoke before me, when he reminded us that we are the United Nations, not the "United Regions".

We thought that the sun had set on this proposal, but to our surprise it was reincarnated this September in the form of a draft resolution circulated to an Asian capital and through the corridors of the United Nations. This latest version carries the proviso that it would be up to the three continents, Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean, to decide how often, how many and which of their respective countries would be the beneficiaries of these regional permanent rotating seats. In fact, this text would immediately grant permanent seats to two large industrialized countries. The under-represented continents, meanwhile, would be led into an endless, intractable dispute over the criteria and modalities for utilizing the seats assigned to them — assigned only on paper, of course. Frankly, we do not see how such a plan can be accepted. No one — I repeat, no one — is so naive as to buy a compromise that would give immediate advantages to two countries and only a long-term credit to their counterparts. Furthermore as was just mentioned the establishment of regional permanent rotating seats would introduce two double standards at the United Nations. The first would affect two regional groups — the Western European and Other States, and the Eastern Europe States — which would be excluded from the rotation. The second double standard would affect all of us, since the hypothetical global superiority of certain countries would be treated as a foregone conclusion. But then where do we draw the line between countries that are economic global Powers and countries that are not?

Let us face another fact of life. Veto power will not be granted to two self-appointed "global Powers" unless it is simultaneously accorded to developing countries — a possibility that has, as I said earlier, been ruled out by one permanent member. Therefore, should this scenario prevail, the States Members of the United Nations would be divided into four categories: category A, the five current permanent members, with veto power; category B, two new permanent members, Germany and Japan, but without veto power, at least for the time being; category C, a certain number of countries, depending on how many are eventually chosen from the three developing continents — also without the veto, of course — that would occupy the three regional permanent seats on a rotating basis and probably forgo the test of democratic elections; and category D — all the rest of us, who would have to continue to compete fiercely for the non-permanent seats, which would increase in number only slightly. I refer here to 165 or 170 countries, large and small, major and minor contributors to the budget, active participants and non-participants in peacekeeping operations, and so on. As I said, the United Nations would end up with four categories of membership. Now what kind of equality is that?

Many of us have already noted that the expression "permanent rotating", semantically speaking, is a contradiction in terms. If a seat is permanent, it does not rotate. If it rotates, it is not permanent. Yet the authors of this terminology have touted it as "constructive ambiguity". With all due respect, it sounds to us more like "destructive ambiguity". It would destroy democracy, since it would violate the principle of sovereign equality enshrined in our Charter. It would destroy justice, making the Security Council even more elitist than it is now. It would curtail one of the General Assembly's main powers: the right to democratically elect by secret ballot and by a two-thirds majority no fewer than two thirds of the Security Council members — 10 out of the present 15.

Let us learn from history; in 1926, the decline of the League of Nations was set into motion, at least in part, by an increase in its permanent membership.

Turning now to the second option — the Italian proposal — I should like first sincerely to thank the countries that have manifested their interest or support. We are heartened by the growing momentum that is building behind it. During the recent general debate, 29 countries expressly mentioned the Italian proposal, many of them for the first time. That number is on a par with the number of delegations that mentioned granting permanent seats to Germany and Japan. All in all, since the beginning of the exercise on Security Council reform, 77 — I repeat, 77 — countries have publicly supported the Italian formula or shown interest in it per se or as a fall-back position.

The Italian proposal addresses and reconciles the two major changes that have occurred on the international scene since the end of the Second World War: first, the

emergence of a group of countries with considerable economic and political capacities, including Italy, which by 1 January 1998 will be the fifth largest contributor to the United Nations budget; and secondly, the emergence of the developing countries, which are far more numerous and important today than they were in 1965, when the Security Council was enlarged.

It is a fact that over the past 50 years, several medium- to large-sized countries have been elected to the Council more frequently than others. It is also a fact that 77 countries, including some founding Members, have never — never — been elected to the Council, while 44 have been elected only once; in other words, for two thirds of the general membership, participation in the Security Council has either been completely blocked or severely limited. Under the Italian proposal, these States would have a far more concrete chance of being elected to the Security Council, since they would be shielded from the competition of the "big brothers" in their respective regional groups. As for the medium- to large-sized countries, whose rivalry for seats has, as we witnessed last week, grown more heated and divisive with each passing year, our proposal aims to bring more harmony and less bitterness to the elections.

Last but not least, the Italian proposal aims to strengthen the role of the General Assembly, which is and must remain the bedrock of our Organization. Since all non-permanent members, whether frequently or regularly rotating, would have to stand for democratic election, the General Assembly's power within the United Nations system would be maintained and even strengthened.

As to the impact of Security Council reform on the financial situation, time and again we have heard that the reward for handing over two permanent seats to two great economic Powers would be an influx of fresh cash into United Nations coffers. However, the financial situation could also be improved through the Italian proposal, and not at the immense cost of granting perpetual, irreversible seats to two nations.

Consider the financing of peacekeeping operations. Currently the permanent members pay the same share for peacekeeping as they do for the regular budget, plus a surcharge of approximately 20 per cent. One argument that has been made in favour of granting permanent seats to Germany and Japan is that their payment of such a surcharge would increase the resources available to the peacekeeping budget. But the Italian proposal has a notable advantage in this respect. It would distribute the burden among a larger number of countries — 30 rather than 2 — since more frequently rotating States would also have to pay a surcharge of 10 per cent, half the ratio paid by permanent members. This would also decrease the Organization's dependence on the contributions and on the whims of two or three countries, and help to reduce the contribution of the less-developed countries. In the long term it might even lead to a reassessment of the surcharge paid by permanent members.

The third proposal on the table is the fall-back position of the Non-Aligned Movement:

> "If there is no agreement on other categories of membership, expansion should take place only, for the time being, in the non-permanent category." *(A/49/965, annex 9, para. 5)*

This proposal follows in the footsteps of the first, and so far only, successful reform of the Security Council in 1965, when four non-permanent seats were added. I have a very simple question: If it worked then, why should it not work now?

Recent voting results have led to speculation that the Non-Aligned Movement is losing its traditional unity and clout. In my opinion, this is a serious miscalculation. Those of us who were invited to Cartagena witnessed the impressive solidarity of the Non-Aligned Movement countries on general and specific issues. The Non-Aligned Movement fall-back position for the enlargement of the Security Council can count on a large base: 113 members in the General Assembly — almost the exact majority needed to approve a proposal for an amendment to the Charter of the United Nations.

Italy remains convinced of the validity of its own proposal; but, as Foreign Minister Lamberto Dini said to the General Assembly one month ago, we are also prepared to accept another formula that would be consistent with the fundamental principles of our proposal — the principles of democracy, equitable geographic representation, effectiveness, efficiency and transparency. We remain firmly opposed to the granting of new permanent seats in any way, style or form.

The Non-Aligned Movement position is animated by the same spirit as the Italian proposal and has a similar orientation. It could represent a first step towards future solutions, while instantly making available additional elective seats, for which all of us could freely compete. The new seats should be allotted to every regional group.

It should not be hard to reach an agreement on the exact number, since we all want a manageable, effective and efficient Security Council.

As to the amendment procedure, we would simply have to follow in the footsteps of the 1963 enlargement, when only two small amendments to the Charter were necessary: one on the number of non-permanent seats, the other on the new majority needed to adopt a resolution.

After three years of intensive work, our inability to reach an agreement on the enlargement of the Security Council could damage the image of our Organization, and this at a time when the United Nations is already being criticized. But we simply cannot, and should not, accept the status quo. That is why we must proceed, with full respect for the principles of openness and transparency. In this endeavour our best guarantee for success is, first and foremost, the objectivity and impartiality of our new President, Mr. Razali Ismail, as well as his determination and experience.

We are at a fork in the road. One path leads to new permanent seats, the other to new elective seats. One brings us back to more discrimination, elitism and inequity. The other takes us forward to greater democracy, participation and justice. It is up to us, and us alone, to decide; but whether we like it or not, even as we speak the future is charting the course we must follow. One hundred and fifty years ago, that great political scientist, Alexis de Tocqueville, wrote that democracy, which shuts the past against us, opens the future before us.

Mr. Hasmy (Malaysia): In recent years, the General Assembly, through the Open-ended Working Group, has worked with renewed intensity towards a Security Council restructured both in form and content. The challenge of change must be met, even if a comprehensive solution has not so far been found. This session is critical in our collective efforts to find the answer.

After three years of intensive deliberations, no concrete progress has been made. Nonetheless, the global momentum towards reform must be maintained and enhanced. The tireless efforts of the three consecutive Chairmen of the Open-ended Working Group and the co-Vice-Chairmen therefore deserve our full appreciation.

There is universal acknowledgement, both within the Assembly and outside it, that the membership of the Security Council should be expanded and its working methods, including the use of the veto, modified and changed. Failure to do so will undermine the legitimacy and effectiveness of the Security Council. The Council can no longer be viewed through the prism of the victors of the Second World War. It cannot ignore the fact that, today, it is answerable to 185 Member States and not just 51, as it was at the inception of the Organization.

Expansion must take account of the legitimate interests of Member States, especially of those that are disadvantaged. The Council cannot remain nor become the permanent abode exclusively of the rich and powerful.

Malaysia maintains that expansion should take place in both categories of Council membership — permanent and non-permanent. Given the increasingly important role of regionalism in inter-State relations, as well as its recognition in the Charter itself, Malaysia and a number of other countries have advocated the concept of permanent regional representation. Let me restate here that that concept attempts to reflect today's reality and to take advantage of the diverse and accelerating developments that have helped boost confidence among the countries of the regions. Furthermore, the role of regionalism in global peace, security and development has blossomed. Permanent representation of a region on the Security Council, based on a mechanism to be worked out and agreed upon by members of that particular region, should become an alternative to what is essentially the nineteenth- century model of great-Power politics that has determined the present structure and composition of the Security Council.

Instead of continuing to be caught up in a log-jam with no solution in sight, the concept of permanent regional representation offers a practical alternative and a viable model for the future structure of the Security Council. The concept essentially seeks to address the need for equitable and balanced geographical representation wherein permanent seats are allocated to each of the developing regions of Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean and not to individual countries. Under that concept, the industrialized countries are conceived of as an identifiable region. The regional representatives, selected by their respective regions on the basis of criteria consistent with the relevant provisions of the Charter, shall exercise all the rights enjoyed by the other permanent members.

The African Group has proposed two permanent seats for Africa. If the other two developing regions and the industrialized groups are given two seats each, there

would be an additional eight permanent seats. The increase in permanent seats must be complemented by an expansion in the number of non-permanent seats, especially for regions that currently do not have sufficient membership. This would make a Council of 27 members, which is relatively small in comparison to the whole of the membership of the Organization today. Such a composition takes into account the need for the Council to function effectively and in an efficient manner. The concept of permanent regional representation, as well as others put forward along similar lines, such as the African common position and permanent regional rotating seats, should not be set aside but should rather be treated with the seriousness that they deserve.

The continued existence of the veto in the Security Council has made that body, whose decisions have global reach and implications, a blatant instrument of the foreign policies of the permanent members. Instead of safeguarding the global interests of peace and security, the use of the veto or the threat of its use can only serve to promote the national agendas of the individual permanent members. As a result, the basic needs and interests of the general membership are often compromised. While explicit exercise of the veto has declined since the end of the cold war, the threat of its use has often been exploited by the permanent members, thereby creating imbalances in the decisions and actions of the Council. Furthermore, the veto negates the principles of democracy and the sovereign equality of States, and its use, as has often been proved in the past, prevents the Council from fulfilling the will of the international community. For these reasons, Malaysia has consistently declared that the veto power in the Security Council is undemocratic and anachronistic and we have consistently called for its abolition.

While recognizing the difficulties, and the reality that the permanent members would not give up their privilege of absolute power in the Council, we believe that, at the least, the use of the veto should be rationalized and the present voting system in the Council modified. A mechanism should therefore be established that would ensure that a single veto could not prohibit the majority in the Council from making a decision or pronouncement. Its scope should be restricted solely to enforcement measures under Chapter VII of the Charter. A proposal on the question of the veto has been put forward by the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and is contained in annex VII of document A/50/47/Add.1 of 9 September 1996. Enough has been said during our deliberations on this question over the past three years. Our only hope now is to see the permanent members recognize the fact and be more forthcoming instead of continuing to adopt a dogmatic approach. Only then could substantive progress in all aspects of Council reform be made.

Similarly, adequate suggestions have been put forward by various delegations with regard to the question dealing with the working methods of the Security Council. Those suggestions were not made for the sake of making comments or throwing unnecessary criticism at the Council, but were aimed at ensuring the transparency, accountability and legitimacy of that body. My delegation fully subscribes to the proposals made by the Non-Aligned Movement as contained in General Assembly document A/49/965 of 18 September 1995. The effective functioning of the United Nations could be further enhanced through improved networking between its principal organs. The relationship between the Security Council and the general membership of the United Nations in the General Assembly could be enhanced through regular consultations between their respective Presidents or through wide consultations with concerned parties, including regional organizations.

These proposals were developed further by other delegations in the course of the Working Group's deliberations at the last session of the General Assembly. We cannot deny that some measures have been adopted by the Security Council, but they should not be tentative or provisional. Instead, they should be further enhanced and institutionalized.

In my delegation's assessment, the questions of decision-making, in particular the veto and that of the working methods of the Council, are the areas that could be resolved without a need for any further deliberations. Numerous proposals have been made, but it is clear to my delegation that they will not lead to any conclusion unless there is both flexibility and political will on the part of the permanent members.

Another related aspect of the Council reform pertains to the so-called "cascade effect". Even in the absence of Charter provisions, the five permanent members of the Council have been permanent members in other principal organs of the United Nations. My delegation cannot find any basis for such automatic membership. It is certainly not the right or prerogative of the five, as they have claimed. In keeping with the democratization of the United Nations systems and in upholding the principle of the sovereign equality of States, the automatic membership of the permanent members of the Council in other organs or bodies of the

United Nations should be reviewed as soon as possible. The permanent members' automatic elections to those organs should not be taken for granted and, in other organs of this Organization where they serve, they must share the responsibilities of membership and not insist on membership while refusing to discharge their responsibilities.

Finally, my delegation wishes to acknowledge the importance of the ideas and inputs that non-governmental organizations and academic society can contribute to the work of the Working Group. Their involvement would benefit our work as we move forward to resolve this important matter. Such involvement would, of course, be without prejudice to the whole issue, which we believe should be finally determined by the intergovernmental processes. We do hope that the Working Group will devote some meetings to hearing the views and receiving the inputs of these groups, which are rich in ideas on the reform the Council.

Mr. Wlosowicz (Poland): The international community today seems to have no doubt as to the need to reform the Security Council. There is widespread agreement that this reform should be instituted in order to respond adequately to the dramatic changes in international relations. Its principal aim should be to enhance the ability of the Security Council to fulfil its main responsibility under the Charter: to maintain international peace and security.

At its forty-eighth session, the General Assembly decided to establish an Open-ended Working Group to consider the questions related to the reform of the Security Council. Although the results of the Group's work so far have fallen short of the cherished expectations of the majority of United Nations Members, it must be noted that considerable progress has been made on some aspects of the subject with which this body was charged. For the first time, the Working Group managed to produce a comprehensive report which covers the whole spectrum of issues related to the Security Council. It is a clear indication that discussions on the reform of the Council by the Working Group went beyond the presentation by United Nations Member States of their general positions and reached a new stage: the in-depth analysis of proposed solutions.

The deliberations of the Working Group have also had an impact upon the working methods of the Security Council. In this regard, we note that non-members' access to information about the proceedings of the Security Council has been improved through, among other things, regular briefings by the Council's President. It is worth noting as well that the recent and increasingly frequent practice of convening open orientation debates of the Security Council with the participation of interested States not only has enhanced the transparency of the Council's proceedings; but has also helped the United Nations Members in general to express their views on the issues under consideration by the Council. Transparency has also been enhanced in the field of peacekeeping operations following the statement made by the Council President on 28 March 1996 concerning the amendments to the procedures of meetings of troop-contributing countries. My delegation was one of those which proposed these changes.

Yet in spite of the progress already accomplished by the Working Group, a considerable divergence of views, even on the most important aspects of Security Council reform, still lingers among Member States and the prospects for compromise are still fairly remote. For this reason, we are convinced that the most important task before Member States is an arduous attempt to surmount their differences. We believe that, at present, the Working Group should focus on the search for compromise solutions, however difficult this search might prove. With this in mind we note that we would pleased to see the mandate of the Working Group extended.

Poland is ready to make its contribution to the search for mutually acceptable solutions. We believe that, at this critical juncture, it is imperative to display maximum flexibility and readiness for compromise. For our part, we have carefully analyzed our position in the light of the views expressed so far in the discussions and we will soon present our considerations in the form of an informal position paper, which will elaborate on our previously presented views concerning the most important aspects of the Security Council's future, including one of the most difficult among them: the issue of the size of the Council and the allocation of newly created seats.

At this stage I would like to focus on one point. We believe that the solution concerning the size of the Council is to expand it to between 21 and 25 members. While we are most favourably considering various ideas concerning increased representation for other regional groups, we have to state quite clearly that any enlargement of the Security Council should also result in augmented representation for Eastern Europe, a region in which the number of States has more than doubled in recent years. We cannot go along with any formula

which would, directly or indirectly, imply a discriminatory stance towards the Eastern European Group and in which all other regions would get a share in the extension. Having already endorsed the entirely justified aspirations of Germany and Japan to permanent membership in the Security Council, we also support an enhanced representation of the developing countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America in both categories of membership of the Council.

I would like to return for a moment to the important issue of improving the Security Council's working methods. Although in the earlier part of my statement I pointed to some progress that has been made in this field, it seems evident to my delegation that a lot still remains to be done and that efforts should be continued, especially with regard to transparency and the availability of information about the work of the Security Council to the membership at large. Judging by our experience as a non-permanent member of the Security Council, we are of the view that discussion of the working methods of the Security Council, in addition to emphasizing improvements to the link between the Security Council and the United Nations general membership, should focus on, among other things, further developing the cooperative character of the Security Council's proceedings and the process of executing its decisions. It should also focus on more harmonious cooperation between the Council — as the body carrying primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security — and the regional arrangements referred to in Article 52 of the Charter.

We believe that improvements in the working methods should constitute a continuous task for the Council. They can be implemented, as was the case in the past, without necessarily waiting for the formal completion of the Working Group's work.

In conclusion, let me again stress the importance we attach to the reform of the Security Council. We believe that this reform is one of the central elements in the effort to strengthen and reinvigorate the entire system of the United Nations.

Mr. Tello (Mexico) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: For the third consecutive year, the General Assembly has before it a report of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council established by resolution 48/26.

In the recent general debate, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of my country, Angel Gurría Treviño, stated:

> "Mexico considers it essential that in evaluating the proposals before us, account should be taken of the need for that organ's composition to reflect the increase in the membership of the Organization, while strictly respecting the wishes of the countries of each region and the principle of equitable geographical distribution". *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-first Session, Plenary Meetings, 13th meeting, p. 15)*

The report we are now examining is a faithful reflection of what took place in the Group, and makes it clear that, despite the general conviction of the need to enlarge the Security Council, major differences still separate us on fundamental issues. I intend to focus on the very limited areas of convergence that exist, particularly with respect to the composition of the future Council and the need to limit the scope and exercise of the right of veto.

In the first place, in paragraph 26 of its report the Working Group rejected what is known as the "quick fix", which involves admitting as permanent members only the two developed countries that have so requested insistently. With this affirmation, the most discriminatory formula among all those that have been put forward has been discarded. In addition, paragraph 29 of the report specifically refers to the proposal of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries to the effect that:

> "in case of no agreement on the increase of other categories of membership, expansion should take place only, for the time being, in the non-permanent category". *(A/50/47, para. 29)*

Let us not forget that this position reflects the view of a very significant group of countries, almost two-thirds of the Members of the United Nations.

Lastly, paragraph 31 of the report reflects the widespread support for the idea of limiting the right of veto, an excessive privilege enjoyed by the five permanent members. It should come as no surprise, and indeed did not surprise us, that the only strong opposition to changing this situation has come from precisely those five countries.

As will be recalled, we began the discussions in the Working Group with great enthusiasm in January 1994. We thought at that time that the international community was in a position to design a Security Council that would reflect the circumstances of today's world, so different from those in which it was created in 1945. We set ourselves the goal of strengthening the functioning of the organ to which we, the States Members of the United Nations, have delegated the delicate responsibility of maintaining international peace and security. We recognized that the task of reforming the Security Council should be based on the principle of sovereign equality of Members of the United Nations, on equitable geographical distribution and on contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security. We also reiterated at that time the need to transform the Council into a more transparent, more representative, more legitimate and more efficient instrument, capable of facing the new challenges.

We considered that the end of the cold war offered a unique opportunity to correct defects and imbalances in the composition and working methods of the Security Council. Reality very quickly frustrated our hopes for genuine reform. We saw with great disappointment that, contrary to the original spirit, there were some who had the intention, precisely, of accentuating the inequalities and extending the privileges to others.

The discussions in the Working Group were deadlocked practically from the outset by the claims of a small number of countries which, on the basis of reasons that were never convincing, requested admission to the privileged group.

As is well known, Mexico sees no justification whatsoever for increasing the number of permanent members. We have said, and we repeat it here now, that the five we currently have are more than enough.

We do not understand how at the same time as the validity of the fundamental principle of sovereign equality embodied in the Charter is being reiterated, efforts are being made to increase the number of countries enjoying special rights and privileges.

How can we speak of the need to take equitable geographical distribution into account if, as a result of the exercise, we are faced with a Council in which a single geographical group would have four permanent members? How can we believe that the Council's effectiveness would be increased by giving more countries the power to prevent the adoption of its decisions?

We all know that the composition and working methods of the Security Council are not an example of democracy. How then can we pretend to correct this shortcoming by increasing the number of its permanent members?

The political realities of 1945, we must not forget, compelled us to accept that five of the founding Members of the United Nations should enjoy exceptional privileges, thus constituting an exception to one of the cornerstones on which our Organization rests. We do not believe that the contradiction should be repeated now by increasing the number of those who are beyond the general rule.

Like other countries, Mexico submitted a proposal that could help to move the negotiations forward. With flexibility, in a constructive spirit and, I venture to say, with ingenuity, in May 1995 we put forward for the Working Group's consideration a formula that could constitute the basis for a solution. Nevertheless, all our efforts have as yet been of no avail in the face of the insistence on the part of those who consider that they have superior merits and are asking us to go back to times we thought already behind us rather than to move forward towards an Organization prepared to face the challenges of the twenty-first century, as is the wish of the vast majority of Member States.

In a new attempt to unlock the negotiations, proposals have recently been surfacing for the establishment of rotating permanent regional seats, as already referred to by other speakers. As they have indicated, the very term "rotating permanent" embodies an inevitable semantic, logical and real contradiction. Clearly, if something is permanent, it cannot be rotating, since the latter necessarily implies periodic and continuing change.

At the same time, we need to bear very much in mind that the establishment of this alleged new category is in fact nothing, I repeat nothing, new. It is precisely the current system. For example, under the existing arrangement, two rotating seats are permanently, I repeat permanently, assigned to my region, Latin America and the Caribbean. Today, they are occupied by Chile and Honduras. Two years ago, they were occupied by Brazil and Argentina. The same applies in the case of other regions. Indonesia and the Republic of Korea were elected to the two seats permanently assigned to the Asian Group. Two years ago, these seats were occupied by Pakistan and Oman. In the case of the Western European and other States, Italy and Germany were

elected to the two seats permanently assigned to that Group. Two years ago, those seats were occupied by Spain and New Zealand. The same scheme applies to Africa and Eastern Europe.

Thus this apparently innovative suggestion is nothing other than the current system disguised under a new name. In order to understand what is behind this initiative, we should like to know whom it affects in each region: in other words, which countries in each region would have the right to participate in the rotation; how often, that is to say, how many years they would occupy the seat; and what privileges these new seats would carry with them, that is, whether they would have the right of veto or not. We hope the sponsors of this proposal will clarify these questions in due course.

My delegation, which has participated constructively in the discussions of the Working Group, regrets that the claims of a very small number of countries have prevented us from making progress towards a viable solution. Accordingly, we urge those who are seeking a status contrary to the spirit of the Charter to abandon their anachronistic ambitions, which are in any case very far from enjoying the support of the 124 countries necessary for the two-thirds majority referred to in Article 108 of the Charter. We believe that the time has come to make an honest choice between what is impossible and what is feasible.

My delegation is in favour of the continuation of the work of the Working Group in 1997. That is because we are convinced that with a serious and realistic attitude it is possible to achieve a reform which, as President Zedillo said in this same hall,

> "is respectful of the purposes and principles that gave birth to the Organization, a reform that ensures a more democratic, transparent and efficient system, better equipped to forge a future of peace". *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Plenary Meetings, 36th meeting, p. 17)*

Mr. Minoves-Triquell (Andorra) *(interpretation from French)*: Allow me to address this Assembly briefly today in order to reiterate the interest of my State, the Principality of Andorra, in the process of reforming and enlarging the United Nations Security Council. Since my country was admitted to the United Nations in 1993, Andorra has been guided by the Charter in evaluating possibilities for reform of that organ, and especially by the spirit inherent in the words

> "We the peoples of the United Nations determined ... to reaffirm faith ... in the equal rights ... of nations large and small".

Within the Working Group on that subject, we have carefully followed the discussions on the right of veto, the possible increase in the membership of permanent or non-permanent members, and the possible new characteristics for these categories. Being one of the youngest Members of the United Nations entails maintaining a certain reserve, even modesty, in the approach to be adopted when faced with a problem as complex as the reform of a vital organ of our Organization. Nevertheless, we spoke out when we thought that more transparency was needed in the activities of the Security Council or when the size of States was to be taken into consideration for possible membership of the Council. The principle of sovereign equality of States, large and small, strong and weak, embodied in Article 2.1 of the Charter, underlies the very concept of the United Nations and we will not cease to defend it.

Until now the number of proposals for reform has been very great. Some States have argued in favour of increasing the two categories of members. Others, such as Italy, propose that we only increase the number of non-permanent members. Many ideas have been expressed as to how to choose the members, that is, should we decide on regional or subregional rotation and try to determine whether certain States should have seats in the Council more frequently than other States? At the same time, we have seen a concern emerge that the effectiveness of the Security Council could be damaged if too many members were to make decision-making impossible.

How are we to direct our debates in our joint endeavour? The Security Council must be operational: once expanded, it cannot have more than some 20 members without losing in performance, agility and rapid reaction capability. Perhaps, in fact, in order to facilitate more frequent access to non-permanent seats by some United Nations Members, especially those who wish to invoke Article 23 (1) —

> "due regard being specially paid, in the first instance to the contribution of Members of the United Nations to the maintenance of international peace and security and to the other purposes of the Organization, and also to equitable geographical distribution" —

we should delete the part of Article 23 (2) which states that: "A retiring member shall not be eligible for immediate re-election".

The veto is an historic witness to the Second World War, but it is also an indicator of the balance of force and power which is hard to ignore. Even though it is used less than before, it is still at issue in the debate in the framework of Security Council reform, on which it seems difficult to arrive at a consensus. Obviously, if we reach agreement only on increasing non-permanent members, this question will no longer be so urgent. But if, on the contrary, we opt to enlarge the group of permanent members, we will also have to see whether these new States will also be given Council status including the right of veto. This, it would seem to me, requires further in-depth thought. Some States have already given their sometimes opposing positions in this regard.

One delegation at the Dumbarton Oaks Conference, and in San Francisco, suggested, according to Sydney Bailey, that the United Nations Charter should specify that, in electing non-permanent members to the Council, special attention should be paid to military contributions made by States for the maintenance of international peace and security. Military and other contributions made by States are important and should be rewarded and acknowledged, especially for the maintenance of peace where men and women risk their lives in areas of conflict. Nevertheless, States with less military capacity would also have a role to play in an enlarged Security Council, if necessary. Indeed, some small countries, because of their history, are well acquainted with the art of compromise and negotiation, and can bring to the Council a different world view and different diplomatic skills, which are all quite necessary to face the new post-cold war situation. Bailey reminds us also that representatives of permanent members of the Council do not necessarily have more influence than representatives of non-permanent members:

(spoke in English)

> "I would stress that non-permanent members have sometimes played a decisive role, and their representatives may win high esteem because of personal qualities of courtesy, persistence and integrity" (*Bailey, S.*, the Procedure of the United Nations Security Council, *second edition, Oxford, 1988, p. 110)*

(spoke in French)

I see in the reform of the Security Council new and credible possibilities for seats for small States whose impartiality and the nature of whose diplomacy might breathe new energy and creativity into the resolution of conflicts entrusted to the good offices of the Council.

The Principality of Andorra would like the United Nations to be the standard-bearer of human solidarity — an effective Organization, respected around the globe, an Organization of which the citizens of the world can be proud. The reform process we have begun should help to project this image and to restore the confidence of our citizens in the validity of the Organization. In the case of Security Council reform, our major goal is an effective Council adapted to the needs of conflict prevention and the maintenance of peace; a Council that acts rather than reacts; a Council that interacts with the rest of the United Nations, which would have even closer links with the General Assembly pursuant to the principles of transparency and forthright cooperation.

Mr. Mahugu (Kenya): The question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council has engaged this Organization since three years ago, when the Open-ended Working Group was established to consider the matter. Considerable time and energy have been spent in the inter-sessional periods with a view to coming up with a workable consensus agreement. The delegation of Kenya considers this to be a very important task, and has therefore played an active role in all the meetings, formal and informal, with the expectation that an agreement would soon be reached on all the issues.

In his address to the General Assembly early this month, the Foreign Minister of Kenya called for the reform of the Security Council to reflect the principles of democracy, transparency and equitable representation. He also appealed to all Member States to exercise greater flexibility on the various positions they had taken so far, in order to reach an early consensus. I wish to reiterate that appeal. We are of the view that it is high time that agreement was reached on this matter.

In this regard, I recall the positions presented to the Working Group by the Non-Aligned Movement, as well as by the African group. As an active member of those two groups, I can only but reiterate the position already eloquently and succinctly presented to the Working

Group by the groups, both of which have presented concrete proposals.

My delegation welcomes the report of the Working Group, contained in document A/50/47, and its annexes, contained in document A/50/47/Add.1. It is evident from that report, that the Working Group has covered considerable ground, particularly on the following specific issues: expansion of the permanent membership; expansion of the non-permanent membership; curtailment of the veto; improvement of the working methods of the Council; and other matters, including the question of periodic reviews. From the report, it is clear that the notion of the "quick fix" has been rejected. An agreement should be reached addressing the imbalance that now prevails.

The Security Council, as now constituted, is not representative, but is a product of the situation which obtained after the Second World War. Indeed, it is an arrangement that was designed to avoid another war and to achieve a balance of power during the cold war. The conduct of international power relations is now characterized by consensus and consultation, and the concept of sovereign equality has received universal recognition.

The question of the distribution of permanent and non-permanent seats must be reconsidered in view of the important role that the Security Council continues to play in international peace and security, taking into account that most conflicts are now concentrated in developing countries. There is no more justification for the continuation of a situation in which at least two continents are not represented in the permanent membership. In this regard, Africa has made a case for at least two permanent seats in the Council. There is also a need to address the question of an expansion of the non-permanent membership to give greater meaning to equitable geographical distribution.

In order to agree on the distribution of seats, it is important that agreement be reached on the overall size of the Council. The figure of 25 is the very minimum that would ensure equitable distribution. This is the only way that could enable us to address the existing imbalance in the Council, where four out of five permanent members now present virtually the same form of civilization. There is no more justification for Africa and Latin American and the Caribbean not being represented in the permanent membership. The African common position makes it clear that seats allocated to the regional groups should be subject to nomination by their respective regions for eventual election by the General Assembly.

We are of the considered opinion that members of the Security Council must, individually and collectively, act in the collective interest of international peace and security and not on the basis of their own narrow national interests. The principle of regional seats would, in our view, go a long way towards ensuring this.

Whereas it is imperative that consideration be given to a country's contribution to international peace and security, we are of the view that a criterion based purely on factors such as the size, power, population or even wealth of a nation would be flawed since none of these factors is static. The new arrangements must therefore have the intrinsic capacity to be regularly reviewed to reflect the changing realities of international power relations.

On the question of the veto, we have noted the reluctance of some members to accept any changes regarding either its elimination or the curtailment of its use. The veto power may have had a justification during the cold-war era. However, with the emergence of the new international order, characterized by increased consultations and consensus, the prolongation of such power and privilege can no longer be justified. My delegation sincerely hopes that an agreement will be reached at least on the limitation of the use or threat of use of the veto, along the following lines: restricted use under Chapter VII of the Charter; a requirement that at least two members be required to enforce the veto; and an enumeration of issues on which the veto cannot apply. Although the use of the veto has been minimized since the end of the cold war, there is no doubt that the threat of the use of the veto has made it impossible for States Members of the Organization to engage in a meaningful dialogue on some issues of grave importance. The use or the threat of use of the veto creates an atmosphere in which it is difficult to reach a consensus on such issues. My delegation continues to hold the view that the veto is a negative instrument which cannot play a useful role in decision-making in the prevailing international atmosphere.

Finally, my delegation welcomes the commendable efforts that the Security Council has recently initiated to improve its working methods and decision-making process. These steps have gone a long way not only towards improving transparency but also towards ensuring the legitimacy of the Council's decisions. We

therefore call for the formalization of these measures through an amendment to the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council as well as to the relevant sections of the Charter. We are of the view that these steps could be taken while the Working Group continues to be seized of the other, more complicated, questions.

My delegation will continue to work closely with the President of the General Assembly and with other delegations as we grapple with these important issues. We are confident that we shall benefit immensely from Ambassador Razali's wide experience and well-known skills as a consensus-seeker and consensus-builder.

Mr. Petrella (Argentina) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: First, I wish to convey my appreciation to the co-Vice-Chairmen of the Working Group whose report we are considering today. Ambassadors Breitenstein of Finland and Jayanama of Thailand have met the great responsibility of providing us with a valuable and solid document.

This document has led me to some very general reflections which I believe it useful to share. To begin with, I believe that there continues to be an interest among those of us who participated in the work of that Group in increasing the membership of the Security Council. I also believe — and this is very important — that we all consider that the Council should improve its working methods in order to increase its transparency. That would be the best way to move towards greater efficiency, representation of legitimacy in its decisions.

It also seems quite clear that the initial optimism that rapid decisions would be possible has vanished since the idea of expanding the Council was put forward at the beginning of this decade. We note today that Council reform is not a simple linear exercise that involves seeking specific opinions on who will be members of the new Council, how many new members there will be, for how long and with what powers. The matter in fact goes much deeper than this. Thanks to the work of the Working Group and to its wise leadership, we have realized this in time. This is a complex matter because it is not a question of changing the composition of a principal organ of the United Nations simply because some of us wish to do so, or because it seemed the right thing to do on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary. The question at hand is to find acceptable mechanisms to overcome the crisis of the Organization and to provide the Organization with the tools that will enable it successfully to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century.

The crisis of the Organization is not, as one hears, strictly financial in nature, because all those of us who owe money and who make significant contributions to the budget will, in the end, pay our contributions. Nor does the crisis of the United Nations necessarily stem from antiquated structures, because these structures have been undergoing change.

The real crisis of our Organization is a crisis in the multilateral spirit, a crisis in the spirit of collective action. It was this spirit which, in order to put an end to arrangements among the few and to mistrust, led to the establishment of the League of Nations, which in 1945 gave way to the United Nations. And it is this spirit which, unfortunately, may be disappearing today. This has led to a crisis in participation, especially among the smallest countries.

The crisis is reflected in the secret and exclusionary methods that the Security Council has practised ever since the mid-1980s. The Security Council has become an organ many of whose deliberations are neither followed nor witnessed by Member States, nor explained thoroughly after the fact.

This is particularly sensitive for countries with smaller delegations — in other words, those that represent smaller countries. Such countries constitute the vast majority of the Members of the United Nations. In general, these countries can least influence the processes in which the Security Council is involved.

In this respect we should ask how many times this majority of countries is consulted or informed when there is no urgent vote in the Assembly. This is what I would term a crisis of participation; it is the most important crisis, because it weakens the multilateral system at its roots.

It follows that we who form the majority would like to see, as a condition of any reform, greater transparency and wider participation in the Security Council. We certainly all wish that the changes will put an end to unnecessary secrecy, exclusion, delays in distributing information and the fact that it is impossible for us to participate. Listening to the presentation of reports and forming our own opinions, for example, is a useful way of participating which would not affect confidential private consultations. Such consultations have always existed, and will continue to do so, because they are a necessary part of any negotiating process.

In this context, I believe that it would be useful to recall the comments of Mr. Alain Juppé, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of France — a permanent member of the Security Council and a founding Member of the United Nations — in document A/49/667 of 11 November 1994. His comments are in line with ours. This document states, *inter alia*:

> "In his statement to the General Assembly, Mr. Alain Juppé ... expressed the wish for the Security Council to increase its reliance on public debate in reaching its decisions". (*A/49/667, p. 1*)

I also wish to emphasize the comments, made in a similar vein, of the distinguished African representative, Ambassador Simbarashe Simbanenduku Mumbengegwi of Zimbabwe. On 31 March 1992, in the Security Council itself, he stated:

> "Finally, this 15-member Council acts on behalf of a total of 175 States Members of the United Nations. This means that 160 States have placed their security, and possibly their very survival, in the hands of the 15. This is a solemn and heavy responsibility that each and every member of the Council carries. It is therefore of crucial importance that every decision taken by the Security Council be able to withstand the careful scrutiny of the 160 Member States on whose behalf the Council is expected to act." (*S/PV.3063, p. 54-55*)

What we all, without exception, wish for is a Security Council that is forward-looking and does not fall back into the structures of the past. Those structures were the result of wars, and as such no discussion or consultation took place on them. That was in the past. With the end of the cold war and the dissolution of East-West antagonism, that past, fortunately, has come to an end.

Hence, we should not encourage further unjustified elitism. Today we must look towards the future. The Working Group must guide the Assembly and the Council. To a certain extent, and for this reason, the mandate of the Group is of such overriding importance that it should not be set aside. Perhaps this fact was not duly realized.

When we consider the Council's agenda over the past few years, we see that the main conflicts with which it has been dealing have taken place within, rather than between countries. Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali made that clear in his annual report on the work of the Organization. For us, this means that the Council must also deal with emergency situations for civilian populations, propose humanitarian measures, punish terrorism, promote specific cases of disarmament and even help with social issues and matters relating to development and political organization within countries in conflict.

In today's world the concept of a threat to peace is not the same as it was in 1945 or 1964. This has resulted in the Council's novel, though debatable, interpretation of Chapter VII of the Charter. It has also resulted in development being considered part of that broad concept of peace, an idea that has been supported by the non-aligned countries and the countries of Latin America. We must accept the fact that we have made progress, and that our parameters today are more demanding than those of the past.

My participation in the debates of this Assembly began only recently, but I must confess that discussing the expansion of the Security Council as we have been doing seems somewhat frustrating. It is frustrating and worrying that the majority of the Members of the United Nations could believe that this discussion is ultimately of interest only to a minority. I also believe that it is frustrating constantly to discuss formulas that permanently exclude countries that have made valuable and proven contributions to the collective tasks of the Organization for many years and which, furthermore, are among the main contributors to the Organization. Such formulas, coming after three years of work, are not realistic and are probably one of the causes of the deadlock. If these formulas are not acceptable, we should not, for the present, insist on them.

It is also worrying to hear it said that, in the end, a package will have to be negotiated. What package? It is not as though the changes required in other areas of the United Nations, which are truly urgent, cannot follow their course while the enlargement of the Council is still under discussion.

The impression of the public and parliaments of many countries is that the Organization needs to be restructured so as to be less of a burden and to help ensure good governance and development. The question of the expansion of the Council as viewed so far is not so urgent.

It has been hinted that the Council needs to be expanded because this would help relieve the deficit. This argument is not even worth considering.

In the light of and despite all we have heard, we can carry on discussing the matter as we have done to date, but let us not forget that this is not a constructive debate because it is deeply divisive for regions, the only basis on which any kind of representation could be founded. On the contrary, I believe that we could make a more in-depth analysis of the host of proposals not based on exclusionary criteria.

The Council's current agenda and worldwide trends call for broader-based formulas. In my view, we need a Council with bona fide members politically motivated to face the new agendas with time-tested convictions.

Mr. Rodríguez Parrilla (Cuba) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The agenda item on equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and other related matters is one of the most significant and important on the agenda of the General Assembly. That has been made by the numerous references to the need to reform and democratize the Security Council made during the recent general debate and by the long list of speakers for today's debate.

For our delegation, the necessary restructuring of the Security Council involves the expansion of the number of its permanent and non-permanent members, the application of the principle of equitable geographical distribution and the introduction of reforms that ensure democracy and transparency in its work on the basis of the Council's procedures and authority being in accordance with the powers granted under the Charter.

In this comprehensive process of reforms, it is also paramount to revitalize the General Assembly and to rehabilitate the essential links between it and the Council. This would enable the sole universal organ of the United Nations fully to exercise its authority, including the right to remain duly informed of the Council's activities and decisions and to make the recommendations it deems necessary, since the Council acts as a representative of and at the behest of all the Member States.

At the fiftieth session of the General Assembly, the Cuban delegation participated with interest, flexibility and respect for the opinions of others in the deliberations of the Open-ended Working Group on Security Council reform. Many variables emerged or were reiterated during the negotiations and the positions expressed by countries and regional groups varied greatly, which has turned this Working Group into a broad-based and complex forum. Logically, the search for consensus on critical issues of universal interest is a process that demands flexibility and time. It is only natural that it be controversial or sometimes seem too slow or contradictory, but it is the only democratic and sure way to find better solutions that have had time to mature and can be shared by all. In our opinion, this scenario is reflected to a great extent in the report the Working Group submitted to the General Assembly.

In this connection, the Cuban delegation wishes in particular to acknowledge the active presidency of Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral and the laudable and tireless work of the Vice-Presidents of the Working Group, the Permanent Representatives of Finland, Mr. Breitenstein, and of Thailand, Mr. Jayanama, whose efforts and patience we highly appreciate.

As a result of the negotiations on this item, Member States have been able to identify trends, priorities and aspects without which it would not be possible to create a solid consensus to keep us from hasty and artificial solutions.

Our delegation, as a member of the Non-Aligned Movement, endorsed and reiterates a motto that is widely supported today: It is necessary objectively to evaluate the direct historical relationship between the diversity and number of Security Council members and the Organization's membership.

More than 50 years after its inception, the United Nations has changed radically. The remarkable increase in the number and diversity of its Members, which aspire to participate equitably in all the bodies and spheres of activity of the Organization, is in our opinion one of the essential bases of the reform process in the Security Council.

The strict application of the principle of equitable geographical distribution should be the cornerstone of Security Council expansion, because it is the only genuine way to ensure the necessary representative and democratic nature, transparency and effectiveness of that organ.

Any formula that excludes the interests of developing countries from this process would be counterproductive, because the main imbalance to be redressed in the composition of the Security Council is, in fact, the underrepresentation of developing countries. We recognize that this is not the only element to be considered, but it is certainly the most important.

We have studied with profound interest and attention every proposal submitted to the Working Group on the increase of the number of permanent and non-permanent members, as well as the options for a more frequent rotation of non-permanent seats. The Working Group's deliberations have shown that a significant number of Member States do not support the establishment of so-called permanent seats, an option that, regrettably, would always be discriminatory and selective in and of itself and in relation to the permanent members, and would never ensure the representation deserved and desired by the developing world, at least so long as the category of permanent membership continues to exist.

With regard to the democratization, transparency and review of the Council's working methods and procedures, the Working Group examined many objective and comprehensive proposals, including those submitted by the Non-Aligned Movement.

We acknowledge with pleasure that, in the past few years, in response to the repeated demands of the Organization's Member States, which the Security Council represents and is accountable to, some measures have been implemented, which we welcomed with satisfaction, aimed at improving the transparency of the mechanisms and decision-making process of the Council. However, such measures will only be effective when they are institutionalized once and for all. In this respect, our delegation endorses the criterion that the process of institutionalization must be implemented de facto through the adoption of the final rules of procedure of the Security Council and a thorough revision of the relevant provisions of the Charter.

The veto issue has also been the subject of substantive deliberations. In recent times the Security Council has adopted consensus decisions on the most diverse international issues and on core peacekeeping and international security matters. But there have been other decisions that have not been, nor should they be considered, expressions of real consensus in the Security Council. We cannot underestimate the enormous damage to the credibility of the United Nations and the Security Council caused by double standards in the latter's actions, often related to the principle or use of the veto.

The silent threat of the use of the veto continues to be an influential factor in some decisions and pronouncements of this body. Thus, our delegation stands for the complete elimination of the institution of the veto and, until then, at least a gradual restriction of that privilege.

The General Assembly and the Working Group can count on our delegation's constructive, flexible and modest contribution and its respect for the opinions of others. Cuba is deeply committed to the goals of an authentic and far-reaching reform of the Security Council, a reform guided by José Martí's formula: with everyone and for the good of everyone.

Mr. Ruiz Pérez (Colombia) (*interpretation from Spanish*): It is an honour for me to address the Assembly, on behalf of the countries of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), on the agenda item before us. The Non-Aligned Movement has attached the utmost importance to the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters. The non-aligned countries have participated actively in the deliberations of the Open-ended Working Group since its establishment three years ago.

On various occasions the Movement has expressed its position on the matters under consideration by the Working Group. During the deliberations of the General Assembly last year, we presented the decisions adopted on these matters at the Eleventh Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, held at Cartagena in October 1995.

The Non-Aligned Movement has stressed the urgent need to democratize the United Nations in a way that reflects the universal nature of the Organization and fulfils the principle of sovereign equality of States. The Non-Aligned Movement has pointed out the need for democracy and transparency in the work of the Security Council.

As expressed in the final communiqué of the meeting of Ministers for Foreign Affairs and heads of delegation of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, held at New York on 25 September last, in the framework of the fifty-first session of the General Assembly the Ministers and heads of delegation renewed their support for the proposal submitted by the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries on 13 February 1995 to the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council. They also expressed their support for the document entitled, "The question of the veto", also submitted to the Working Group by the Non-Aligned Movement. My delegation wishes to reiterate, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, that the Movement will

continue to participate in the work of the Working Group in a constructive, concerted and active manner.

My delegation had the honour of reading the declaration issued by the Non-Aligned Movement on the item under consideration, and it has our full support. Allow me now to express the position of the Government of Colombia on the agenda item under consideration.

After three years of discussion by the Working Group, we have before us a report that goes beyond its predecessors and contains important substantive aspects. It is obvious, as the report shows, that, first, there is consensus within the Group on the expansion of the Security Council, the review of its working methods, the strengthening of its capacity and effectiveness, the enhancement of its representativeness and the improvement of its working efficiency.

Secondly, the work of reforming the Council should be based on the principles of sovereign equality of all Members of the United Nations, equitable geographical distribution and contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security, as well as to the other purposes of the Organization.

Thirdly, in that context, the concepts of transparency, legitimacy, efficiency and democracy should be taken into account.

Regarding the working methods of the Security Council, the report properly reflects what has been expressed by a large number of delegations regarding the need for the Security Council to improve its working methods and transparency in the light of experience gained on issues such as the reports of the Council to the General Assembly; briefings to States non-members of the Council; consultations with current and potential troop-contributing countries; the effective flow of information and exchange of views between the Council and the Assembly; and the participation of countries non-members of the Council in its debates, as set forth in Articles 31 and 32 of the Charter.

The report also reflects the wide support for the proposals on working methods submitted by the Non-Aligned Movement at the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly, and those submitted by Argentina and New Zealand which, as has been stated on various occasions, are entirely complementary.

With respect to the size and composition of the Security Council, the report shows a clear reaffirmation of the agreement existing on the need to expand the membership of the Security Council while ensuring equitable geographical distributions, in the light of the substantial increase in the membership of the United Nations, especially in terms of developing countries.

The report also emphasizes the wide support for the proposal of the Non-Aligned Movement that, should no consensus be reached on other categories of membership, the increase in the number of members should for the time being take place only in the category of non-permanent members. Support for this position not only included that of the 113 members of the Non-Aligned Movement, but also that of a considerable number of other countries that are not members of the Movement.

With regard to the adoption of decisions in the Security Council, including the question of the veto, the report reflects the proposal of the Non-Aligned Movement — which is also supported by a large number of non-member countries — to limit and rationalize the veto through an amendment to the Charter establishing as a first step that the veto be applicable only to actions undertaken under Chapter VII of the Charter. Other proposals on the matter submitted by Mexico and Uruguay received special consideration and support in the deliberations of the Open-ended Working Group.

Colombia has opposed the veto power ever since the San Francisco Conference, which it considers to be contrary to the principle of the sovereign equality of States. Maintenance of the veto power also runs contrary to the aim of democratization shared by an overwhelming majority of Member States of this Organization.

The Non-Aligned Movement, in its document of 13 February 1995, indicated that the veto power, which guarantees an exclusive and dominant role to the permanent members of the Council, is contrary to the aim of democratizing the United Nations and therefore must be reviewed.

Since we are unable to eliminate the veto power in the current circumstances we should, at least as a provisional measure, define and limit its scope of application, while bearing constantly in mind that only its complete elimination will permit the full exercise of democracy in the Security Council.

For this reason, we resolutely support the document submitted by the Non-Aligned Movement regarding the question of the veto, which responds to the need for limiting the veto with a view to its elimination.

The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.

United Nations A/51/PV.45

General Assembly

Official Records

Fifty-first Session

45th plenary meeting
Wednesday, 30 October 1996, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Razali Ismail ..... (Malaysia)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 47 *(continued)*

Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters

Mr. Kittikhoun (Lao People's Democratic Republic) *(interpretation from French)*: First, I would like to thank the representatives of Finland and of Thailand for their outstanding efforts in organizing so well the work of the Open-ended Working Group on the reform of the Security Council. With much skill and with great integrity, they have conducted the work in a generally satisfactory manner. I wish them good luck and every success in the long and difficult task ahead.

The Lao delegation would like today to reaffirm its well-known position, which has been stated repeatedly both here in plenary meeting and in the Open-ended Working Group. We believe that there is a need to enhance the effectiveness of the Security Council by increasing its membership so as to better reflect the new global political realities and in particular — I repeat, in particular — to improve the representation of the developing countries. Like many other delegations, we continue to believe that the number of both permanent and non-permanent members should increase. Indeed, the Lao delegation believes that an increase in the number of permanent members, from both developed and developing countries, would strengthen the United Nations and its legitimacy because the Organization would thus better reflect the new international political configuration. An increase in the non-permanent members is no less important. Such an increase would allow more States to hold seats on and participate in the work of the Council, thus increasing its credibility.

As for the criteria for selecting new permanent and non-permanent members, my delegation takes note of the observations and proposals that have been made, and we hope that a formula acceptable to all will soon be found. We believe that — because of their importance and their political and economic influence — countries such as Germany, Japan and India should be become permanent members of a newly expanded Security Council.

After more than three years of lengthy, difficult discussions, we have arrived at a point where, we believe, we should assess the situation. It is important to know whether we are at an impasse. If we are not, let us continue and let us make greater efforts and work with renewed vigour towards our common goal: the strengthening of the effectiveness of the Security Council. If, on the other hand, we are at an impasse, we must have the courage to ask the following questions: What can we do? Why has this come about? And how can we work together to find a realistic solution to this problem? This is what my delegation wishes to tell the Assembly at the crucial stage of our debate. Our delegation is prepared to consider any new, realistic approach which would help to advance the work of the Open-ended Working Group.

96-86652 (E)

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We commend certain measures that the Security Council has already taken to improve its practices and working methods so as to make them more transparent. We are on the right path, and we should continue in this direction. However, much still remains to be done. Accordingly, we still are of the view that the Council must inform and consult non-members of the Council that are affected by its decisions. Even more important, those countries should have the right to state their positions to the Council publicly, before the Council embarks on informal consultations, and they should also be able to be present as observers in informal consultations of the whole on the item relating to them. This practice can only be beneficial, because the Council, by hearing from these countries, would understand them better and would therefore be in a better position to contribute to a solution to the conflict in question.

The question of the reform of the Council is neither simple nor easy. It is of unprecedented complexity. We are neither too optimistic nor too pessimistic. Let us work together with patience and perseverance but, in particular, with greater vigour. With collaboration and consultation among all, we very sincerely believe that we can go forward.

Mr. Bjørn Lian (Norway): I have the honour to speak on this agenda item on behalf of the Nordic countries: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Sweden and my own country, Norway.

Allow me first to say that the Nordic countries consider reform of the Security Council an urgent priority. We have therefore participated actively in the work of the Open-ended Working Group, and we submitted a revised Nordic position paper in June last year. The basic elements of that paper are still valid and I would like to go briefly through some important elements of the Nordic position.

First of all, the fundamental objective of Security Council reform should be, as we see it, to strengthen the capacity of the Council to discharge its duties in accordance with the Charter. The Nordic countries support an increase in the permanent as well as in the non-permanent membership of the Council. The permanent membership should be increased by five new seats. These new permanent seats should be allocated with the aim of having the Security Council better reflect present political and economic realities, including improved representation in the Council from Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean. In order to ensure equitable geographical representation, it is also essential to increase the number of non-permanent seats. For these seats, regions should be encouraged to establish equitable rotation systems, and the re-election ban should be maintained. The total membership of the Council should lie in the low to mid-twenties; in the Nordic position paper we have suggested 23.

The question of the decision-making procedures of the Council needs thorough consideration. Different aspects of the voting procedure — such as the scope of the veto and its possible extension to new permanent members — are interrelated. These questions are likely to be settled only as part of a comprehensive reform of the Council, and should therefore be addressed by the Working Group in that perspective.

The Nordic countries encourage the implementation of further measures that enjoy broad support and which have the aim of improving the working methods of the Security Council and the transparency of its work. We welcome the steps that the Council has taken in this respect. We attach particular importance to the new arrangements established for consultations with troop-contributing countries.

After long deliberations, the Working Group submitted quite a substantive report to the fiftieth session of the General Assembly. We welcome that report. It includes a great deal of convergence of views on several issues. The discussions in the Working Group during the last session were thorough and useful. A number of interesting proposals were made with a view to facilitating compromise solutions to the complex problems involved. We consider that major elements of a comprehensive reform are now on the table, and that the Working Group should move to a more concrete phase in its work as soon as it resumes its deliberations. We note that this view was also expressed by a number of speakers during the general debate at this session of the General Assembly.

The Nordic countries thus feel that the time is now ripe for the Working Group to move away from a general discussion and to engage in real negotiations. But, at the same time, we are aware that the subject matter before us is politically both complicated and sensitive. Mindful of the necessity to avoid a political impasse, it is essential that we all approach the process we are engaged in in a positive manner and continue to actively explore creative and constructive ideas on how to meet the various concerns involved. The Nordic countries stand ready to make our contribution to such efforts. The Nordic

countries pledge their full support to you, Mr. President, and to the other members of the Bureau in the very important work you have before you.

Mr. Shah (India): Mr. President, as the Assembly continues its consideration of agenda item 47, I would like to take this opportunity to place on record my delegation's appreciation of your predecessor, Ambassador Diogo Freitas do Amaral's, sagacious guidance of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council. I would like to also thank the co-Vice-Chairmen, the Permanent Representatives of Finland and of Thailand, for their untiring efforts in steering the discussions during the last session.

The comprehensive and substantive report of the Working Group, contained in document A/50/47, is a vivid reflection of the status of deliberations on the subject. It places in perspective all aspects of the work undertaken on this vital issue thus far, indicates the complexities, highlights areas of congruence, delineates prevalent trends and clarifies the continuing differences. It is a reflection of the progress achieved so far. It is also a testimony to the fact that, given time, sustained efforts and patience, consensual progress can be achieved in regard to the unresolved issues before the Working Group.

The annexes to the report are a reflection of the seriousness with which Member States have approached the subject. As many as 10 of the working papers submitted during the course of the last session focused on the core issue of membership, four dealt with the veto and decision-making process, and three were related to various aspects of the Council's working methods. This is in addition to the wealth of ideas suggested earlier and compiled in document A/49/965. Briefly, the discussions have evoked widespread interest and multifaceted responses. The opinions expressed are an indication of the vibrancy of the deliberations and the ingenuity that Member States have brought to the consideration of this important yet complex subject.

India was among the 10 Member States that initiated the process of the inscription of this item on the agenda of the General Assembly at the thirty-fourth session. The imperatives of expansion and reform that spurred that initial step have been subsumed in the mandate provided to the Open-ended Working Group, owing to the substantial increase in the membership of the United Nations, especially of developing countries, and to changes in international relations. Consequently, suggestions for solutions have to address the problem of the imbalance in the representative nature of the Security Council and should not accentuate existing inequities.

India's views on the question of expansion of the Security Council are well known and were most recently reiterated by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of India in his address to the General Assembly on 4 October, when he stated,

> "India supports expansion of both the permanent and the non-permanent categories. We are against piecemeal or temporary solutions which discriminate against developing countries. We believe that the same yardstick must be applied to all countries, developed or developing, from all regions or groups, for induction as permanent members. We believe that under any objectively derived criteria for the expansion of permanent members, India would be an obvious candidate." *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-first Session, Plenary Meetings, 22nd meeting, p. 15)*

My delegation welcomes the decision taken at the fiftieth session of the General Assembly to extend the tenure of the Working Group. We expect that when the Group reconvenes next year, it will proceed to build upon the progress already achieved. We encourage the Group to work towards consensus-building on the major issue of expansion of the Security Council. For the Group to achieve a just and lasting solution to this very important issue, the prevailing suspicion that some parties might still be considering a quick fix must be eliminated through transparency and honesty.

It has been suggested on occasion that one country or the other should be added to the permanent category without going through a process of selection on the basis of relevant criteria. Paragraph 28 of the report acknowledges that criteria have been suggested by Member States to serve as the basis for selection. We believe that it would be prudent and beneficial for the Working Group to examine this further and come up with an acceptable set of criteria against which the claims of every country could be assessed. Selection should follow rather than precede the establishment of criteria.

The non-aligned countries emphasized in the Cartagena Summit Declaration that any attempt to exclude non-aligned countries from an expansion in the membership of the Security Council would be unacceptable. This and other important proposals made by

the Non-Aligned Movement have found wide acceptance in the Open-ended Working Group. The legitimacy and efficacy of the Security Council is directly linked to its representative nature. It is a recognition of this reality that in paragraph 26 of the report of the Working Group it is explicitly stated:

> "In the event that there is agreement for an increase in the permanent membership, an increase only by industrialized countries would be widely regarded as unacceptable." *(A/50/47)*

India believes that in our discussion on the reform package, the Council's working methods and decision-making procedures should also necessarily receive adequate attention. The report of the Working Group highlights that the consideration of this aspect has "deepened" and that there is "a considerable convergence" of views. A number of imaginative, innovative and far-reaching proposals have been made. They are based on the premise that since the Council acts under the fiduciary responsibility bestowed by Member States, it has an obligation to take cognizance of their views, be transparent in decision-making, not encroach on the jurisdiction of the General Assembly, and adjust and adapt to the aspirations and needs of the Member States. Reform of the Security Council's working methods and decision-making procedures is intrinsic to any comprehensive outcome.

The reform of the United Nations in all its aspects is our collective responsibility. Such reform must address not only the failings of the past but also the needs of the future. The reform of the Security Council is cardinal to any reform of the United Nations. Such reform should therefore be undertaken on the sound basis of durability, resilience and experience rather than expediency and artificial time-frames designed to force the pace. Decisions on an issue as important as the structure, composition and functioning of the Security Council cannot be taken but by consensus.

Mr. President, my delegation has noted the promptness with which you have moved in constituting the Bureau of the Open-ended Working Group. May I assure you that India will constructively support your efforts when the Group resumes its work next year.

Mr. Mabilangan (Philippines): The latest report of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council (A/50/47) marks, in my delegation's view, the first truly substantive account of the status and progress of discussions on issues before the Group since its inception. More importantly, the report records a growing convergence of views and wide support in the Group on many issues. However, it also reflects differences on key issues.

The issue of increased membership in the Security Council cannot be considered in isolation but has to be addressed in the context of the reform of the Council, reforms towards greater transparency and democracy of its working methods and towards a more balanced relationship with the General Assembly. In terms of our work, this should translate into aiming for an agreement consisting of significant elements relating to an expanded size and a more representative composition of the Council, the enhanced transparency of the Council's working methods and the democratization of its decision-making process.

Although there has long been agreement to expand the membership of the Security Council, the Group remains deadlocked on the issue of expanding permanent membership. Efforts must therefore focus on finding common ground for a compromise on this issue. In this connection, the Group should explore various options, which, in turn, could principally be based on the existing proposals on expansion as well as on any future submissions. Some of these options could include, first, the 2+3 formula or other combinations of increases in permanent and non-permanent seats, including the regional rotation of permanent seats; secondly, the shared-seat formula; thirdly, proposals for purely non-permanent expansion; and finally, the Non-Aligned Movement proposal for an expansion of non-permanent members for the time being, if no agreement is reached on permanent members. We suggest that all the proposals falling under these broad options be examined with a view to identifying their common elements or identifying those proposals that could form the basis for compromise.

The issue of the Council's working methods constitutes a vital and essential component of this exercise. The Group should aim at building upon the report's observation in paragraph 20 that "discussions showed a considerable convergence of views" on the issue of the working methods and transparency of the Security Council. The Group should aim to recommend to the General Assembly at an early date concrete and specific measures on the basis of existing written and oral proposals on this subject, which, as stated in paragraph 22 of the report, "received wide support in the Open-ended Working Group". These proposals are geared towards

making the Council's working methods more transparent or open as well as enhancing the relationship between the Council and the general membership and other principal United Nations organs.

The Group should also devote serious attention to specific measures which would contribute to the democratization of the Council's decision-making process. Towards this end, the proposals on the table deserve full consideration by the Group, including those on the veto. The veto is an integral part of the issue of decision-making, and we look forward to a meaningful outcome on that subject.

My delegation believes that at its next round of substantive discussions the Working Group should aim at translating the "wide support" on issues or proposals indicated in the report into concrete recommendations. It should also seek to reconcile differences on the other issues. Although the report would serve as a good starting point for the Working Group's next round of discussions, the Group might wish to consider subsequently, at the appropriate time, the feasibility of working on the basis of a discussion paper or approximate draft discussion text. The content of this paper would naturally depend on the state of play at the time, if ever, when it is considered feasible. What is important is that such a paper could facilitate and focus our consideration of all relevant issues by enabling us to move away from the past format of general statements and reactions.

Mr. Pérez-Otermin (Uruguay) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The subject before us is undoubtedly the most important of all, as it involves changing the structure of the organ of greatest political power in the Organization: the Security Council. Therefore, the task of the Vice-Chairmen of the Working Group is also, as we see it, the most difficult. My delegation is fully aware of all this and therefore wishes once again to congratulate Ambassador Breitenstein of Finland and Ambassador Jayanama of Thailand on the work they have accomplished, and in particular for the preparation of the final document.

It can be seen from what I have said that my country attaches prime importance to this subject, and, without prejudice to our own ideas for contributing to the modernization of the Security Council, we will always be prepared to study and discuss any other initiative in order to contribute to the achievement of a broad consensus.

It is Uruguay's view, first of all, that a reform of the composition of the Security Council would contribute to a political updating of its structure, thereby giving it greater representativity. The changes that have taken place in the world since the signing of the San Francisco Charter and since the only expansion of the Council which took place in 1965, have been of enormous importance, and it can be stated unequivocally that these changes could not have been foreseen by most world leaders, scholars and observers of the political scene.

The Security Council is the essentially political organ created under the Charter. Since its structure, competence and decision-making process were established accordingly, it must inevitably be restructured in line with changes to the foundation on which it has rested. It is therefore Uruguay's view that the composition and number of its members, both permanent and non-permanent, should be structured in accordance with the new political reality.

Secondly, it is Uruguay's view that any change in the number of its members, bearing in mind not only the size of the Council but also its decision-making mechanism, should take account of the fact that the Security Council is intrinsically an executive organ, and the change should therefore not affect this essential characteristic. This would mean the paralysis of the organ, and thus the end of the Organization.

Thirdly, in keeping with its deepest democratic convictions, and in concurrence with virtually all the statements made by the political leaders who attended the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, Uruguay agrees with the need to democratize the Organization and to strengthen the General Assembly. We therefore believe that it is the right time to begin to discuss proposals to that end.

In this connection, my delegation submitted an initiative aimed at beginning to reduce the absolute power of the right of veto. This proposal is contained in annex XII and has been issued as document A/AC.247/1996/CRP.14. The proposal is based on the fact that the veto mechanism is contained in most democratic constitutions in the world today. Its goal is to balance the relationship between the executive and legislative branches in states of law. Thus, everyone is quite familiar with the veto power of executive branches and the power of parliaments to override vetoes by a given majority. The mechanism allows for various gradations in implementation, and therefore its application to the relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly could be the subject of broad negotiations.

For example, there could be negotiations on when it would be appropriate for the General Assembly to intervene; on the possibility of the Assembly acting only in cases where a single Member State has exercised veto power; on the possibility of the Assembly intervening when more than one State has exercised veto power; and on the necessary majority for the General Assembly to override a veto.

Such a mechanism would undeniably contribute to meeting the aspirations reiterated by almost all the political leaders of the world and expressed at the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations to democratize the Organization and to strengthen the General Assembly. We have no doubt that such a mechanism would do both.

Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, it is Uruguay's view that any Security Council reform must be uncomplicated so as to avoid any major modification to the Charter, to preserve the essence of its basic tenets and not to alter its purposes and principles. One of these principles is the sovereign equality of all States, which must be amply applied in whatever procedures are used to agree on the admission of new States to the Security Council. These procedures must be transparently democratic, for the admission both of permanent and of non-permanent members, and must not in any way allow the creation of new categories of States, which would deepen the original differences contained in the Charter.

Mr. Türk (Slovenia): I would like to begin with a word of congratulation and admiration for the work done by Ambassadors Fredrik Wilhelm Breitenstein of Finland and Asda Jayanama of Thailand, the two Vice-Chairmen of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council. The progress made in the Working Group is to a very large extent the result of their tireless efforts, their diplomatic skill, their perseverance and their patience. The General Assembly is thus given the opportunity to discuss the report of the Working Group (A/50/47 and Add.1) and to deliberate on the progress made thus far.

The reform of the Security Council is one of the most important reforms needed in the United Nations system. It is also one of the most sensitive reforms, and it is most clearly overdue.

The reasons for the needed reform of the Security Council have been stated and restated many times. As a result, consensus has been practically achieved on the understanding that the Security Council must be expanded and its working methods improved.

All this is necessary in order to give the Security Council a more representative character, more support among the United Nations Members and a higher level of legitimacy. Furthermore, the right kind of expansion would strengthen the effectiveness of the Security Council and contribute to the authority of the United Nations in general.

I do not wish to present the views of Slovenia on the question of reform of the Security Council in detail at this stage. We explained our views in some detail on many occasions in the Working Group. Furthermore, our basic positions are represented among the submissions by Member States and groups of Member States on pages 68-71 of the English text of last year's report (A/49/965). Slovenia joined a group of Member States with similar views and continues to hold those basic views reflected in the document mentioned.

Let me only mention that Slovenia is among those Member States that favour an increase in both categories of members of the Security Council, permanent and non-permanent. An increase of up to five additional permanent seats would be appropriate. Such an increase should take into account the need for regional representativeness and the willingness and the capacity of the candidates for new permanent seats to contribute to the global maintenance of international peace and security. As stated on earlier occasions, Slovenia sees Germany and Japan among the candidates for new permanent seats.

Furthermore, there should be an appropriate increase in non-permanent membership. We believe that a Security Council composed of a total number of up to 25 members would be adequately representative and would, at the same time, enhance the possibilities for effective action of the Council on behalf of all Member States.

We also believe that the rule of non-eligibility of a retiring non-permanent member of the Security Council should remain as a necessary safeguard against any form of indirect or de facto permanence in the membership of the Security Council.

In the area of improvement of methods of work, we continue to favour all those improvements which strengthen the transparency of the work of the Security

Council and create closer cooperation between the Security Council and the General Assembly.

As we read this year's report of the Working Group, and as we recall the discussions preceding the finalization of the report, we clearly recognize that further progress needs to be made. We cannot be satisfied with what has been achieved so far. Last year there was still a great deal of repetition, and many general statements were made which did not lead to a genuine exchange of views. As recognized in paragraph 23 of the report, it also became clear that a number of Member States were not ready to take final positions on the questions of the size and composition of the Security Council because of the interlinkages between the size and composition and other matters in the mandate of the Working Group. Hence the feeling that not enough progress has yet been made.

On the other hand, however, we see in the report of the Working Group several new elements which require careful discussion in the present session of the General Assembly and further elaboration in the context of the negotiations to follow, next year. Let me address a few of them.

In paragraph 20 of the report we find reference to a considerable convergence of views on the question of the methods of work of the Security Council and to the fact that the current improvements in the working methods of the Council have been encouraged by discussions in the Working Group. This is a very welcome evolution.

We would like to encourage those innovations made this year in the work of the Security Council which enhance the cooperation between the Council and the general membership of the United Nations. The practice of holding open orientation debates, based on a concept originally presented by France, has had a successful beginning, and we would like to encourage the Security Council to continue with it. In addition to providing an opportunity for the United Nations Member States to participate in the discussion preceding the decision-making stage in the Security Council, this new practice has also helped clarify the distinction between debates, which can benefit from the variety of views expressed by Member States, and the negotiation of resolutions which remain the responsibility of the members of the Security Council.

We suggest that the Working Group continue to explore the possibility of involving States which are not members of the Security Council in the work of the Council at the discussion stage. In that regard, useful ideas have been suggested in the working papers by the Czech Republic and by Argentina and New Zealand. These papers are mentioned in the report, in paragraph 22, and we would like them to be discussed further at a subsequent stage of the work of the Working Group.

The sections of the report devoted to the issues of the size and composition of the Security Council and on its decision-making reveal the difficulties which still need to be resolved.

In addition to this we are reminded, in paragraph 24 of the report, of the implications of an expansion of the Security Council for equitable geographical distribution. Indeed, this Charter requirement might be affected, depending on the final agreement on the total increase in the number of members of the Security Council, and careful calculation will be necessary before final agreement is reached in order to ensure that all regional groups, including, in particular, that of Eastern Europe, whose membership in the past few years has doubled in number, are adequately represented. The same care should be given to ensuring the adequate representation of developing countries.

This question shows that further discussions and negotiations concerning the expansion of non-permanent membership of the Security Council will have to take care of certain aspects of the wider problem of expansion which were less visible at earlier stages.

The main question, however, remains whether the expansion of the size of the Security Council should take place only in the category of non-permanent seats or should encompass both permanent and non-permanent seats. While the opinions on this question remain divided, it is important to note that innovative approaches have been suggested and are mentioned in paragraph 27 of the report before us. We support the proposal for two regional permanent seats for Africa proposed in the African common position, and we noted that in his statement yesterday, the Permanent Representative of Kenya emphasized the importance of that proposal. We think that this proposal should be given particularly careful attention at a subsequent stage of the work on the reform of the Security Council. We also believe that other proposals of this kind should be studied with a view to ascertaining to what extent the concept of regional rotation can meet the needs of different regions.

In this context, I wish to refer to a point made yesterday by the Permanent Representative of Germany,

who mentioned in his statement that several States expressed support both for the creation of new permanent seats and also for the Italian proposal. He then said that this could be understood as a desire to combine the principles of permanent regional representation and rotation, leading to permanent regional seats as a possible solution to the problem of selecting permanent members from the three regions concerned.

I think that this point is very interesting. It contains an approach that certainly needs to be discussed further. It suggests a certain convergence of the different approaches mentioned so far in the Working Group, and I believe that the Working Group should give it due attention during the next stage of its work.

Another — and perhaps the most important — aspect of the question of expansion of the category of permanent members of the Security Council relates to the veto, which, in addition to permanence, is the main factor characterizing the status of permanent members.

We note with regret that the Working Group did not make much progress with respect to the veto. As mentioned in paragraph 31 of the report, in the course of discussions many proposals were made with respect to limitations on the veto, and were widely supported. Given the importance and the inherent complexity of the subject, it is natural that opposition was expressed. However, it is worrying that the opposition expressed did not allow for any further discussion. That opposition was very clear and blunt, and did not indicate any readiness for negotiation. This is disturbing because the whole question of the nature and quality of the reform of the Security Council hinges on the issue of the veto. We therefore appeal to all to give particular attention to the question of the veto at the subsequent stage of work and to explore the possibilities of limiting its scope and use in a reformed Security Council.

In this context, we wish to draw attention to the last sentence in paragraph 31 of the report, which refers to an important concept: non-discrimination. We believe that the meaning of this concept, as it might relate to various models of expansion of the permanent membership, must be fully explored. In our view, all the permanent members of a reformed Security Council should have equal status. To make this possible, the scope and use of the veto ought to be limited for all permanent members. Some specific proposals as to how that could be done have already been made in the Working Group. Others may follow. They should all be given careful consideration and the advantage of a more genuine dialogue than has been the case so far.

In conclusion, I should like to express once again our appreciation for the work done so far by the two Vice-Chairmen of the Working Group. We greatly appreciate the work done by the President of the General Assembly at its fiftieth session, who was also Chairman of the Working Group. We are convinced that your own role, Mr. President, in the subsequent stage of the work of the working Group will be extremely important. A great deal of time has been spent on this issue, and we hope that in 1997 the work of the Working Group will be successfully concluded.

Mr. Campbell (Ireland): The report to the General Assembly of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council contains a full account of the discussions that have taken place since the beginning of the year. The annex that accompanies the report gives an indication of the richness and depth of the ideas and proposals presented by many delegations to the Working Group. I pay tribute to the Vice-Chairmen, who have so patiently and skilfully steered our work. We look forward to the energy and authority that you, Mr. President, will bring to the Working Group in support of their efforts.

The position of my delegation on the principal issues of substance has not changed since I addressed the General Assembly on this agenda item almost a year ago. I stated then that, on the basis of certain fundamental points of principle, we would take a flexible attitude to various aspects of the issues as they evolve, giving full consideration to the views of other Members. We continue to support enlargement of the permanent and non-permanent categories to enhance the effectiveness of the Council and provide more equitable geographic representation. In addition to supporting seats for Germany and Japan — countries which many, including ourselves, see as appropriate candidates for permanent seats in terms of the outreach of their economic and political status — we support new permanent seats for Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean. From the outset we have stated our view that curtailment of the veto — an issue on which the Permanent Representative of Slovenia has just spoken with much authority — and periodic review should be intrinsic elements of any overall solution.

We have also supported the proposals put forward, and in some cases already endorsed by the Security Council, to improve the working methods and transparency of the work of the Council. In this regard,

we have found the proposal by the Czech Republic for a new interpretation of Article 31 to be particularly constructive and worthy of serious consideration by the Council. These are not secondary reforms. Together with enlargement of the Council, they will greatly strengthen understanding of and confidence in the Council's authority through a greater openness in the Security Council's relationship with the general membership.

Participation in the debate last year and careful study of the proposals contained in the annex to the report of the Working Group have given me the impression that our approach, which we put forward together with a number of like-minded countries, is shared by a reasonably large number of delegations. However, as we all know, on a number of fundamental issues there is as yet no consensus — to put it no more strongly than that.

When the Working Group next meets to plan its programme of work for the fifty-first session, it will be faced with an important choice: whether to proceed as before with a series of scripted exchanges on the principal issues of Security Council reform, all of which are listed in considerable detail in the annex to the report before us, or whether to accept that, unless we inject a new sense of urgency into the work of this Working Group, and perhaps into the reform process in general, the process is in danger of running out of steam.

If the Working Group takes the first course, without being more precise about its objectives, a year from now we may have a report that is little altered from the one before us today. If, however, we concede that new momentum is required, we will have to address seriously the ways in which work should develop next year to best effect. We would need to identify ways of narrowing the differences that now separate us. This would mean moving from argument, analysis and debate towards a plane on which the first stages of negotiation might commence.

It is probably realistic to surmise that progress on the issues under consideration in the Working Group will be influenced by wider factors that can encourage solutions or otherwise. Having said that, however, I should say that conditionality is not on our agenda, and we should explore every avenue in the Working Group to get the maximum results achievable in the common interest.

To give fresh impetus to the next stage of our work, we should make use of all the established instruments of United Nations practice that are available to us. In addition to formal sessions of the Working Group, these would include open-ended informal consultations and perhaps some brainstorming sessions on certain of the more complex issues. We believe that we should be flexible about informal efforts to bring views closer together as long as overall transparency in our work is respected so as to maintain confidence in the process.

It seemed clear to us from the Group's discussion at the last session that papers or non-papers from the Chair can be particularly helpful in focusing discussion and avoiding directionless debate. We recognize that this is not an easy task and that it is only feasible if confidence and cooperation are forthcoming from all delegations. But if there were a greater readiness to use this approach, the potential for progress would be widened in our view.

My delegation will encourage working methods to move things forward with general support. We look forward to participating actively in the work of the Group during the fifty-first session and hope that we can make decisive progress in reaching solutions to the issues which we have now been addressing for over three years.

Mr. Park (Republic of Korea): The Republic of Korea has, with keen interest, been actively engaged in the important deliberations of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and is pleased to join today's debate on agenda item 47.

The modernization of the Security Council is a critical issue of our time and a challenge to which the international community must rise. The ability of the United Nations to formulate a credible peace and security agenda for the next century will depend greatly upon our accomplishments in that undertaking. Therefore, this daunting task must be addressed earnestly and with prudence. Throughout the reform process, the Republic of Korea has maintained a consistent position and one that we should like to reaffirm on this occasion.

First and foremost, we support the expansion of the Security Council. That is clearly warranted in the light of the dramatically changed character of international relations as well as the substantial increase in United Nations membership over the past decades. If the Security Council is to become more legitimate, credible and effective as the principal organ responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security, it must be more representative of today's world.

Second, we have stressed that in enlarging the Security Council, particular caution should be exercised against taking any decision that would empower a select few Member States by giving them a privileged and irreversible status. We believe that such a move would run counter to the trend of democratization and further undermine the adaptability of the Organization to the continually evolving international environment.

The notions of "permanency" and "the veto" have become rather outdated. Despite the reality of the current permanent members, we are not yet convinced by the argument that without an increase in permanent membership, Security Council reform would be neither balanced nor complete. This cannot be reconciled with the new era of democratization, global cooperation and interdependence.

Third, we support the expansion of the non-permanent membership. We are pleased to note that this year's report of the Open-ended Working Group documents the position of a large number of Member States, and states that:

> "The proposal that, in case of no agreement on the increase of other categories of membership, expansion should take place only, for the time being, in the non-permanent category received wide support." (*A/50/47, para. 29*)

As to a concrete modality for enlargement of the non-permanent category, we are open to a variety of proposals, including the simple addition of several non-permanent members or schemes providing more frequent rotation. We believe that the Working Group must concentrate on working out a modality for non-permanent expansion that would be acceptable to the general membership, rather than focusing on a highly divisive and controversial issue, namely, whether or not permanent members should be added. In this connection, I agree with the views of the Italian Ambassador that we stand at the crossroads, leading either to new permanent seats or to new elected seats, and I emphasize, elected seats.

As regards the question of new elected seats, we do not confine our thinking to the current two-year term for non-permanent members. For instance, we might consider the addition of several new non-permanent members, perhaps as many as eight, with tenures longer than two years, such as a four-year term, which would be elected in exactly the same manner as the current non-permanent members. The equal eligibility of all Member States for that new opportunity could circumvent the strong conceptual objections that any creation of a preselected and privileged group of countries would incur. This can also enhance the overall representativity and credibility of the Security Council.

Fourth, with regard to the current decision-making process of the Security Council, we believe that an overhaul of the veto system is in order. While we recognize the growing trend away from exercise of the veto since the collapse of the cold war, many delegations expressed the opinion during the Working Group's discussions that any Security Council reform package must include the improvement of that undemocratic system. To that end, we support the idea of circumscribing the scope of the veto power to Security Council actions taken under Chapter VII of the Charter, as has been endorsed by so many countries, including the Non-Aligned Movement. In this connection, we take note of the Brazilian Ambassador's interesting proposal to allow permanent members to cast a "no" vote without vetoing.

Another important and closely related veto issue is whether it will be extended beyond the current permanent members. It seems entirely illogical and rather self-defeating to allow the proliferation of veto holders while at the same time trying to minimize the overuse or abuse of the veto. We firmly believe that the privileged group of veto holders, endorsed 50 years ago as a special exception to the principle of sovereign equality, must not be enlarged.

And fifth, we support the further improvement of the Security Council's working methods with a view to enhancing transparency and ensuring greater interaction between non-members and members of the Council, while not sacrificing its operational efficiency. In this context, we welcome the important progress made to that effect in recent years, such as regular briefings by the President of the Security Council to the general membership, more frequent orientation debates, and consultations with troop-contributing countries. These positive initiatives should be consolidated and developed further.

The foregoing views are of particular importance to my delegation and will continue to be our guiding principles in the common pursuit of Security Council reform. We sincerely hope these views can evolve and develop by virtue of constructive and enlightening input from other delegations.

It is understandable that each delegation will have a different opinion as to where exactly we stand on the question of Security Council reform, and just what progress was achieved by the Working Group during the Assembly's last session. Some see none at all, while others observe something tangible. For our part, we recognize at least two significant developments on the issue of enlargement.

One is that the so-called "quick-fix" solution has been declared off the table. This year's report of the Open-ended Working Group states:

> "In the event that there is agreement for an increase in the permanent membership, an increase only by industrialized countries would be widely regarded as unacceptable." (*A/50/47, para. 26*)

Given this convergence of opinion, we may now be left primarily with two options: either to increase the non-permanent category only in its broader sense; or to expand permanent membership to include the developing world along with additional non-permanent members.

Three years of experience in the Working Group tells us that the former option is less divisive in nature and would be easier to bring about and that the latter would be extremely difficult to realize in the light of the complexities surrounding the selection of new permanent members. The idea of permanent regional representation or permanent regional rotating seats was floated and discussed during the past session of the Working Group as a way of bringing the developing world into permanent membership. However, it allows only — and I emphasize the word "only" — the industrialized nations to join permanent membership in the traditional sense, leaving the developing world in a state of great uncertainty.

Moreover, given the complex regional dynamics of the developing world, I wonder how such a formula could work. I note that several delegations have already expressed, rather convincingly, conceptual objections to this apparent oxymoron. It was interesting to hear from the Mexican Ambassador that non-permanent members have already been elected to seats "permanently" assigned to each region.

Another development is that even those who support an increase in permanent membership accept the proposition that the word "permanent" should not imply "eternal", a point made continually by delegations with strong reservations on that increase. We note with interest that Germany, a nation widely regarded as a potential direct beneficiary of an increase in permanent membership, put forward the idea that new permanent members should not be eternal but subject to periodic review with a 15-year interval in the form of a General Assembly vote.

Although its proposal as a whole may not enjoy broad support, it echoes my delegation's repeated advocacy that the qualifications of Security Council members must be checked against time and that democratic review in the form of elections is essential. Furthermore, the combination of "permanent" and "periodic review" might be seen as having something in common with the mix of "non-permanent" and "longer tenure". We take some encouragement from the fact that the conceptual gap is not necessarily unbridgeable. If common ground exists, it would be worthwhile to explore and pursue it. In our view, longer term non-permanent membership is worthy of further consideration.

In conclusion, my delegation looks forward to contributing to the deliberations on this important issue under your able leadership, Sir. We also wish to assure you and all other colleagues here today that my delegation is ready to work together on any new constructive initiatives or proposals which may lead us to a consensus on the reform and restructuring of the Security Council.

Mr. Çelem (Turkey): The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey stated at the general debate almost a month ago that, as we embark on the second half-century of our Organization, it is appropriate for the international community to reassess the ways and means by which we can give new impetus to the efforts aimed at building a better and more secure future for all humankind.

The challenges that the United Nations will face in the twenty-first century will probably be greater than ever before. Hence, the United Nations has to adapt itself without delay to changing times and circumstances. It is on this premise that we support the ongoing reform process within the United Nations. Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, on the occasion of United Nations Day on 24 October, aptly stated that:

> "Let us remember that the United Nations founded in 1945 was an unfinished edifice. ...
>
> "The United Nations is a work in progress. Just as our predecessors strove to give us a world organization capable of dealing with the challenges

of the age, so our task is to prepare the United Nations of the twenty-first century." (SGSM/6094)

In this respect, streamlining, rationalizing, revitalizing and restructuring the United Nations system and its work are the widely accepted components needed to bring about a more effective, responsive, representative, democratic and accountable world Organization. These modifications, which are currently under intense consideration, will determine the effectiveness and, indeed, the validity and continued relevance of the United Nations in the years ahead.

The central issue before us is the enhancement of the representative character of the Security Council. The new international political environment requires the democratization of the Council. Since January 1994, the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council has been formulating a set of guidelines for the ongoing reform process.

Two main aspects of our work require equal attention. We have to enhance the representative character of the Council and democratize its method of work.

Mr. Nsanze (Burundi), Vice-President, took the Chair.

On the first point, the enhancement of the representative nature of the Council cannot be confined merely to a quantitative expansion of its size. The modalities of the enlargement should also be elaborated. We do not think that an increase in the overall number of seats alone will suffice to ensure more equitable and representative participation in the work of the Council. The enlargement should be coupled with a fair system of workable rotation. In this context, we believe that the revised proposal for the enlargement of the Security Council submitted by Italy on 12 June 1996, which is contained in document A/50/47/Add.1, annex IX, and our position paper of 15 September 1995, which is contained in document A/49/965, annex V, merit careful consideration.

Turkey strongly favours a genuine and comprehensive reform. Since the establishment of the Working Group by General Assembly resolution 48/26, we have participated actively in every stage of this process. Turkey is against continuation of the status quo. We have to be mindful of the fact that this unique organ has to be able to evolve so that it will efficiently face the uncertainties and challenges that lie ahead.

The recent report of the Working Group on the reform of the Security Council (A/50/47) lays out the facts. Proposals for an increase in the non-permanent membership only, including proposals on more frequent elections for a number of Member States, as proposed by Italy, Mexico and Turkey in annex V of document A/49/965, received both support and objections. The proposal by the countries of the Non-Aligned Movement that, in case of no agreement on the increase of other categories of membership, expansion should take place only, for the time being, in the non-permanent category received wide support. In the event that there is agreement for an increase in the permanent membership, an increase only by industrialized countries would be widely regarded as unacceptable. The concept of regional rotation of permanent seats received both support and objections.

Consequently, it seems to our delegation that an increase in non-permanent seats would seem to be the most natural course of action. Turkey believes that the Working Group should concentrate its efforts on the points that received the widest support.

The proposal introduced by Spain on 4 June 1996 with regard to the criteria for the non-permanent rotational seats, which is contained in document A/50/47/Add.1, annex VIII, deserves careful consideration.

We agree that the contribution of military, police and civilian personnel to United Nations peacekeeping operations should be the first criterion; the next criterion could be the financial contributions disbursed to the Organization's budget; and the third criterion should be the population of Member States. We believe that these criteria, with the flexibility to update them, will address the needs, expectations and changing conditions of the international community.

The improvement of the working methods of the Security Council is an equally important aspect of the reform process. In this respect, the aim should be to make the Council transparent, responsive, inclusive and accountable. The aspects which we would like to see the Security Council adopt are included in the working paper submitted by Argentina and New Zealand on 17 May 1996, which is contained in document A/50/47/Add.1, annex VI.

In this context, we would like to reiterate the importance of transparency. To this end, it should not

only be a regular practice, but a requirement, for the Security Council to hold consultations with interested parties before decisions are made, especially decisions that affect them directly.

The issue of the reform of the Security Council no doubt requires comprehensive and cautious analysis. Reform in the financial area, which is being taken up separately, is itself important. However, it would be unrealistic to assume that financial reform alone would be sufficient to make the United Nations better equipped for the challenges that lie ahead. In this context, I would like to emphasize that with only short-term goals in mind, progress and success will be at risk. At this point in time, when we embark upon the vitally important path of reforming the Security Council, we have to move carefully but resolutely.

Mr. Dejammet (France) (*interpretation from French*): My statement will be very brief. Its sole objective is to express France's continued interest in the work begun three years ago on the expansion of the Security Council. This important endeavour, upon which we embarked in 1993 in the awareness that it would entail difficult negotiations, must be brought to a successful conclusion. Not to succeed, or not to do so within a reasonable time limit, would be a blow to multilateralism. We must — and indeed we want — to achieve reform in order to enable the organs established by the Charter of the United Nations to live up to their full potential.

Resolution 48/26 of 3 December 1993 laid the framework for efforts to expand the Council, and it continues to provide the mandate of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council. We need both to draw the necessary conclusions from the increase in the membership of the United Nations, particularly among the developing countries, and to take into account the other factors that have affected the evolution of international relations.

We must draw a clear conclusion from this mandate: the number of members of the Security Council must be increased, but in a way that will not prevent it from responding swiftly to crisis situations that pose a threat to international peace and security. For that reason we feel that a few more than 20 members should be the maximum. The increase should be designed to ensure better representation of developing countries in the Council. In our view, this presence of the developing countries should be reflected in both categories of Council members: the non-permanent and the permanent members. The general debate has shown that this idea enjoys very broad support.

Furthermore, we can all see that certain States today have an international influence which should be exercised in a more sustained and official way in the United Nations. This is the case with Germany and Japan, which have our full support on this point, as well as the support of many other States. France also believes that the large States of the South should have an appropriate place. Finally, we readily acknowledge that no geographical group should be excluded from the expansion effort. All groups of countries whose numbers have increased are justified in demanding not to be left out.

With regard to the working methods of the Security Council, many steps have been taken over the last three years to make them both more rational and more transparent. We think that we should stick to the pragmatic approach followed so far, which has yielded good results, even though they can certainly be taken further and consolidated. We have managed to avoid the pitfall of seeking to freeze the status quo; let us continue on this path.

During the general debate in the Assembly at this session, we noted that many speakers expressed the hope that there would be no excessive delay in taking the decisions necessary to complete the reform process in the United Nations. Everyone knows that the question of the Security Council's composition is a central element in the reform process. Agreement on increasing the Council's membership is therefore an indispensable component of any true reform.

The initial positions of each of us are now well known, and their repetition would serve no useful purpose. We must therefore set ourselves the goal of concluding negotiations within a reasonably brief time-frame. France, for its part, is prepared to contribute to that process.

Mr. Mapuranga (Zimbabwe): I would like to begin by commending the Chairman and the co-Vice-Chairmen of the Open-Ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters related to Security Council reform for their tireless efforts during the fiftieth session of the General Assembly. They have my delegation's full support as they continue to steer the Working Group in the discharge of its mandate.

My delegation would also like to associate itself with the statement made by the delegation of Colombia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. The Movement has made concrete proposals on all aspects of the reform and restructuring of the Security Council, which we hope will be a positive contribution to the building of consensus on this vital issue.

We welcome the report of the Working Group, which reflects accurately the debate that took place in the Working Group during the past Assembly session. The international community had hoped that the Working Group would have ridden on the wave of the jubilee of the Organization to arrive at an acceptable formula for reform and expansion. We are all aware that this did not happen, and the process is taking too long to yield even the first fruits. In our view, however, the Working Group has to continue until a solution is found to make the Security Council transparent, democratic and accountable to the wider membership of the Organization. The imbalance in the Council has therefore to be redressed.

Only a month ago, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Zimbabwe addressed the fifty-first session of the General Assembly and reiterated the urgent need to ensure that developing countries are adequately represented in the permanent category. The Minister stated:

> "We in Africa maintain that the present arrangement where Africa and Latin America have no permanent representatives on the Security Council, while Asia has only one, is unjust and antidemocratic and must not be allowed to continue. Those three regions should each have at least two permanent seats, with incumbents enjoying the same rights and privileges as the present permanent members. Additional non-permanent seats should also be allocated to each of those regions so as to ensure equitable geographical representation proportionate to the numerical strength of each region in this Organization." *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-first Session, Plenary Meetings, 10th meeting, p. 17)*

As is evident from that quotation, Zimbabwe is committed to the common African position, as clearly stated by the Organization of African Unity. It is inconceivable that, in an era when the virtues of democracy and good governance at the national level are being preached, such democracy is not applied at the level of the United Nations and that an entire continent of 54 Member States is not represented in the Security Council in the permanent category. A Council where all regions are equitably represented will, no doubt, not only enhance the credibility and legitimacy of one of the principal organs of the United Nations, but also enhance the credibility of those who champion the ideals of democracy in human relations.

The Security Council, as at present constituted, empowers only a few Members of the world body, who were accorded this privileged status presumably by virtue of their victory during a war fought half a century ago. In that war, the peoples of the African continent made enormous contributions to the eventual defeat of fascism and Nazism. Yet today it is the handful of permanent members of the Security Council who continue to wield powers that enable them to take or block decisions that affect the destiny of the vast majority of Member States of the Organization. It is our contention that the Security Council, in the post-cold-war era, should not continue to be used as an instrument to serve the interests of a very few powerful countries. It is also our contention that in order to enhance the credibility and universal character of the United Nations, the visibility and vital role of the General Assembly, as the highest decision-making body of the Organization, have to be highlighted and reinforced.

The Non-Aligned Movement presented a position paper on the veto that was supported by an overwhelming number of delegations. The veto is a relic of the cold war. The Non-Aligned Movement's proposal is clear. The scope of the veto has to be curtailed and restricted to only those matters that fall under Chapter VII of the Charter. Eventually, the veto has to be abolished altogether. It is clear from the discussions that took place in the Working Group on this subject that the permanent five are reluctant to discuss this subject seriously. Their intransigent posture, if it persists, will be an obstacle to the reform process. We therefore appeal to them to review their position on this vital issue.

When negotiations on the reform and expansion of the Security Council commenced three years ago, we were told that the reform of the Council's working methods would constitute the so-called early harvest. However, the posture assumed by some Council members in recent days has blighted the prospect for such an early harvest. We applaud President Razali in his efforts to ensure that there is transparency and accountability in the relationship between the General Assembly and the Security Council. We note, however, that some members of the Council were reluctant to see consultations being carried out between the presidents of the General

Assembly and the Security Council. We are convinced that genuine consultations between the Council and the rest of the membership will go a long way towards enhancing its decision-making capability as well as its moral credibility. We are told that the Council is in the process of gradually reforming itself, and also that it is the master of its own procedures. Yet with increasing cogency the question is being asked whether the much-vaunted reforms are not just cosmetic. Should the pace and content of change be left entirely to the five permanent members, to the exclusion of the rest of the 185 Member States of the Organization?

In this regard, my delegation would like to support the Non-Aligned Movement proposal to finalize the provisional rules of procedure — a step that will certainly grant legal weight to the decisions taken by the Council. In calling for the formalization of these measures, we are not advocating that this be done at the expense of other equally important aspects of the reform exercise, such as the expansion. We believe that progress on both fronts can and should be achieved simultaneously, as a package. The current debate should provide a legal and binding framework for the collaboration between the Security Council and the General Assembly, with ultimate authority vested in the General Assembly, as is stated in the Charter.

Mr. Fowler (Canada) (*interpretation from French*): Allow me first to mention that my delegation looks forward to working with President Razali in his capacity as Chairman of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council. We are also grateful for the efforts this year of the two Vice-Chairmen of the Working Group, Ambassador Breitenstein of Finland and Ambassador Jayanama of Thailand. The General Assembly debate on the report of the Working Group allows us the opportunity to review the results of our discussions this past year and to consider how to approach our mandate when we resume our efforts in January.

With regard to the working methods of the Council, the report underlines the considerable time and effort we have devoted to this subject. Delegations participated actively and a number of useful ideas were proposed, which shows the importance most of us attach to reform in this area. That reconfirms the need to ensure that this vitally important body grows and evolves in step with the expansion of the global membership of our Organization and in a manner that is consistent with the challenges we face on the threshold of the twenty-first century.

We welcome the further efforts made this year to improve the transparency, legitimacy, and effectiveness of the Council's activities. As a troop-contributing country, we are particularly pleased with the enhancement of the Council's mechanism for consultations with the countries involved. As our Minister for Foreign Affairs, Lloyd Axworthy, stated during the general debate this year, Canada attaches particular importance to the need to ensure meaningful participation in decision-making by those members whose nationals — military and civilian — are in the crossfire of the conflicts over which the Council is deliberating.

Those developments are reflected in the Presidential Statement issued on 28 March by the Council. Among its most significant elements, the Statement requires the President of the Council to chair meetings with troop-contributing nations and the Council is requested to consult with prospective troop-contributing nations before new operations are mounted. These changes should ensure more direct and timely exchanges of views on vitally important issues of mandate, mission objectives and the adequacy of planned resources in advance of the adoption or extension of peacekeeping mandates.

Thanks to the enhanced deliberations of the Security Council, both the Council members and the troop-contributing nations are now responsible for ensuring that the improvements introduced are used effectively and to their fullest potential.

As the report and its annexes illustrate, there has been some progress in other areas, most notably the more frequent use of formal orientation debates, regular briefings for Member States on the activities of the Council presidency and changes making the activities of the Council's sanctions committees more transparent. These, too, are welcome innovations, as they have made the Security Council more responsive to the concerns of the broader United Nations membership.

However, we can and should do more. Our discussions this year have underlined the fact that the majority of Member States strongly support further improvements in the Council's working methods and the formalization of those changes already made. One area that merits closer attention is the participation in the work of the Council of non-Member States. In particular, those most directly involved in or affected by an issue before the Council should be able to participate in the Council's deliberations on that issue. That is the intent behind Articles 31 and 32 of the Charter, both of which need to

be implemented more effectively. A number of useful ideas on how to do this, including a proposal from the Czech delegation, have been put forward.

In particular, we need a better understanding of how to act on the words in Article 31; according to which:

> "Any Member ... may participate, without vote, in the discussion of any question brought before the Security Council whenever the latter considers that the interests of that Member are specially affected."

There are two points to make here. First, in our view it should be understood that participation would be virtually automatic when a Member is involved in a matter before the Council, either as a directly affected party or as a major troop-contributing country, especially the lead contributors. Secondly, "participation" should be understood to mean involvement in the informal discussions, including on draft texts, not just being graciously allowed to make a public speech in the Council Chamber.

Some have expressed reservations to the effect that further reform, especially in this area, would diminish the Council's decision-making capacity. However, we reject any attempt to preserve and protect the exclusivity of the Council, particularly that of its permanent members. Indeed, we believe that, on the contrary, greater consultation in these areas would allow the Council to take more informed and more appropriate action. Moreover, such changes would, we contend, only improve the Council's decisions and increase its credibility.

(spoke in English)

Concerning decision-making, the focus of the Working Group's attention has been, of course, tightly focused on the question of the veto. We share the view expressed by the majority of delegations opposing any extension of the veto and supporting an urgent examination of how to limit the current veto power and better define its scope. In particular, we believe the current veto ought to be restricted to Security Council decisions under Chapter VII of the Charter. This needs to be considered further in the Working Group. To this end, we believe that the papers presented by Mexico and Egypt on behalf of the Movement of the Non-Aligned this year provide a good basis for further discussion.

The message from most delegations over the past year has said very clearly that extending the veto privilege is decidedly not the best way to deal with the very many concerns already expressed about this issue. Any extension would exacerbate current problems, make decision-making more difficult, potentially exclude more conflicts from the purview of the Council and, once granted, would of course be difficult to review. In short, it would neither improve the functioning of the Council nor enhance its representative nature. Extending veto privileges would almost certainly militate against the effectiveness of the Council in its efforts to maintain international peace and security.

Concerning the primordial matter of the size and composition of the Security Council, there is clear agreement in the Working Group that any formula should be agreed by all. This principle has been the foundation on which we have built all our efforts to date and, we contend, cannot be compromised. Like others, we believe that any expansion should be aimed at recognizing better the contribution of Member States to the broader purposes of the Charter while also reflecting the increase in the membership of the Organization. However, three years of discussion have failed to produce anything close to a consensus on how to do this.

The main obstacle has been the question of the addition of new permanent members. The Working Group has agonized over this from the outset. An enormous amount of time and energy has been devoted to considering ways in which this might be done in a manner acceptable to all. Proposals have been made and put aside. However, despite exhaustive discussions, the subject appears to have become more difficult rather than less.

As the report makes plain, there is, first and foremost, nothing approaching a consensus on whether any expansion in permanent membership is either warranted or acceptable. Similarly, there is no indication that these divergences can be bridged. Even among those who do support the addition of new permanent members, there are differences as to how this should be done. The "quick fix" solution — the simple addition of two permanent members — has not attracted the support it needs to be a realistic option. Other formulas have been put forward in an effort to square the circle, but these have proved similarly problematic and are unlikely, in our assessment, to receive widespread support. One option that received considerable attention this year is the idea of regional rotating permanent members. Variations were proposed, including one that would mix regular with rotating permanent seats. We have strong reservations about all of these proposals. While various formulas

espousing the theme of rotating permanent members would certainly enhance the status of a very select group of Member States, it remains entirely uncertain how these formulas would work and, even less, how they would benefit the large majority of Member States.

The idea of how countries and which countries would be selected for this new category of membership has also defied clarification; indeed, a degree of confusion, creative or otherwise, seems to hover over this question. We are concerned that different suggestions in this regard do not accommodate the vital requirements that all Members of the United Nations participate equally and transparently in the election of all members of the Council.

Most fundamentally, we share the strong concerns expressed by others that these formulas might restrict rather than enhance access to the Council by the majority of the United Nations membership. We fully appreciate the motivations of those countries that have developed these proposals. In our view however, they are simply not the way to achieve a more representative Council.

We have indicated before that the aspirations of several countries to permanent member status is understandable. Nevertheless, it seems difficult not to conclude from our extensive discussions on this issue that the addition of new permanent members — of whatever kind — faces hurdles that, at this time, we simply cannot overcome. The deadlock on this subject is impeding our ability to decide on an expanded Council membership that will respond to the needs of all Member States. It is in effect blocking the reform that we have all agreed is needed to enable the Security Council better to reflect changing times and challenges.

In these circumstances, we wonder whether it might not be easier to obtain agreement, for the present, on expanding the Security Council in the non-permanent category. Agreement here ought to be easier to obtain. This would be a first step that would not by any means preclude future discussion on permanent membership.

As the Canadian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Lloyd Axworthy, noted before the General Assembly a month ago, any expansion needs to better reflect the contribution of members to the broader purposes of the United Nations Charter as well as the need for equitable geographic representation. An expansion in the non-permanent category would therefore require enhanced participation from all geographic regions. Such an expansion would also need to be relatively modest, perhaps 6 to 10 members, to enhance the effective functioning of the Council.

To this end, as we have indicated before, we see considerable merit in proposals that would expand the Council to allow for more frequent rotation by countries which more fully meet the primary requirements of Article 23, dealing with the composition of the Council. This is worth doing for its own sake, to better reflect the intention of the United Nations Charter. Equally important, however, it would reduce the number of candidates and the strength of competition for existing non-permanent seats. It would thereby help to ensure that more countries had an opportunity to serve on the Council than is now the case.

This, of course, remains but one possibility. We remain open to other formulas that would move us forward in the search for a solution likely to attract widespread support. For instance, the possibility of a straightforward expansion of the Council, in the non-permanent category only, for all geographic regions, just as was done in 1965, has always been an option from the outset of our deliberations. Perhaps after three years of inconclusive debate, we ought to give this option some straightforward consideration as an alternative that meets most countries' objectives.

I can assure the President of the Assembly and the Vice-Chairmen of the Working Group of Canada's full and active participation once the work of the Group resumes in January.

Mr. Wang Xuexian (China) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The reform of the United Nations is a matter of worldwide concern. At its heart is the reform of the Security Council, which has a decisive impact on the whole reform process of the United Nations. During the last session of the General Assembly, the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council had further in-depth and fairly detailed discussions on the reform of the Council, which contributed to enhanced mutual understanding by all parties, though no substantive progress was made on major issues. The Chinese delegation deems these discussions useful and hopes that the Working Group will continue to make fruitful efforts at the current session of the General Assembly.

The enlargement of the membership of the Council is at the core of its reform. China is in favour of its appropriate expansion. Since 1963 the United Nations membership has increased by over one third in the wake of the upsurge of national liberation movements and profound changes on the international scene. However, no corresponding change has been made to the composition of the Council over the past 30 years.

What is even more worrisome is that there has long been a serious imbalance in the composition of the Council. Developing countries make up more than two thirds of the United Nations membership. However, this reality is far from adequately reflected by their representation in the Council. This is particularly true for Africa and Latin America, where there is a concentration of developing countries. This imbalance merits our serious attention.

His Excellency Mr. Jiang Zemin, President of China, pointed out at the Special Commemorative Meeting to mark the fiftieth anniversary of United Nations that the reform of the United Nations should reflect the principle of balanced geographical distribution and strengthen the position and role of third world countries in the United Nations.

As an important component of United Nations reform, the reform of the Council must focus on redressing imbalanced regional representation, particularly the serious inadequacy in the representation of developing countries. It must in no way further aggravate this imbalance. Without attaining this objective, the enlargement of the Council cannot be regarded as reform in a real sense; it would be, rather, a failure to reform. Therefore, no reform plan that excludes or discriminates against developing countries will ever be accepted by the general membership of the United Nations, including China.

I also wish to emphasize here that the Council is not a club of the rich, still less a board of directors. Increasing the membership of the Council cannot and should not depend solely on a country's financial contributions to the United Nations. What is more important is whether it has a correct understanding of war and peace both from a historical and from a current perspective and whether it is a positive factor in promoting international peace and security. That is precisely why the United Nations was created and why the Council is entrusted with the major responsibility of maintaining international peace and security to free mankind from the scourge of any future war and aggression.

We are of the view that the reform of the Council is by no means simply a matter of increasing the number of members. It is, in the final analysis, aimed at making the Council a true representative of the interests of all countries in the world, one that enjoys their trust and support, thus better reflecting the purposes and principles of the Charter. This bears on whether the Council can better fulfil its responsibilities for the maintenance of international peace and security and enhance the authority and representativeness of its decisions.

Another important aspect of the Council's reform is the improvement of its working methods. This is aimed at, first, enhancing its effectiveness so that it can better fulfil its responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security entrusted by the Charter, and secondly, increasing the transparency of its work and strengthening the understanding of and participation in its work by the general membership to show that it truly acts on behalf of Member States. At present the Council has already adopted a few measures to improve its working methods. However, some of them are yet to be implemented and further improvements are necessary.

I wish particularly to nt out in this connection that the Council's procedure for imposing and removing sanctions is far from perfect. This has made it possible for one or two countries, bent on having their own way, to brandish the big stick of sanctions against developing countries in disregard of the will of the general membership and of the suffering of the peoples of target countries. The Council has already had quite a few lessons in this regard. We must take practical measures to redress this situation.

China has always supported and vigorously promoted improvement of the Council's working methods and stands for strengthening the Council's relations with the General Assembly and other United Nations bodies, the convening of as many open meetings as possible, the improvement of practices regarding consultations with troop-contributing countries, and the institution of appropriate arrangements for the parties concerned to state their views directly to the Council. China is ready to join the rest of the membership for further useful discussions on improving the working methods of the Council.

Reform of the Council involves the individual interests of all parties. The results will also produce a tremendous impact on various aspects of the United Nations. Given its complexity and arduousness, reform cannot be expected to be completed overnight. Moreover,

the Council's composition, working methods and decision-making procedures came about against a specific historical background. We must therefore keep pace with the times while maintaining a historical perspective in discussing plans to reform the Council.

China hopes that the general membership will conduct full and patient discussions and consultations on various reform plans and recommendations in a spirit of fairness, openness, transparency and broad consideration. All decisions should reflect to the maximum the requests of the general membership and should be made on the basis of consensus to the extent possible. Only in this way can further imbalance be avoided and the true objective of Council reform be attained.

Mr. Wilmot (Ghana): I join others in extending our delegation's gratitude for the work carried out by the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council during the fiftieth session of the Assembly. We also express our appreciation to the co-Vice-Chairmen for their efficiency in guiding the Working Group, and to the Secretariat staff for their support.

Our discussions on this issue over the past three years have revealed broad agreement on the need to expand the Security Council and to improve its working methods by making it more transparent without eroding its efficiency. We have noted with satisfaction the measures adopted so far by the Security Council to infuse some transparency into its working methods and decision-making processes since the Working Group started its work. In particular, we recognize, the increase in consultations between the Council and troop-contributing countries, and the scheduling of formal meetings which non-members are encouraged to attend and where they can make presentations if they so desire. Equally noteworthy are the periodic consultative meetings between the President of the Council and the President of the General Assembly. The institutionalization of these measures has been called for by several delegations, including mine, and we hope the Security Council will initiate steps in this direction. It is also imperative that the opinions and views of non-members of the Council, expressed through these consultations, are taken into consideration in the Council's deliberations and decision-making. In general, enhanced coordination and synergy between the Security Council and the General Assembly are absolutely necessary to ensure a proper balance between those two bodies, as envisaged under the Charter.

As we have stated on previous occasions, any restructuring of the Security Council must take into full account the current geographical configuration of the general membership of the United Nations. This is the only way to ensure equity, accountability, representativity and credibility. And this is especially so when small countries are now increasingly called upon to bear a disproportionate burden for the maintenance of international peace and security, through the provision of troops and payment of assessed contributions for various United Nations peacekeeping missions.

Regarding the issue of expansion, Ghana subscribes to the position of the African Group, which calls for at least two permanent seats and a proportionate number of non-permanent seats for our continent. On the question of the veto, the delegation of Ghana is of the view that although there might have been good reasons for the veto power when the Charter was drawn up, it is anachronistic in its present form and must be modified and limited to clearly defined situations within the context of Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter.

Our delegation suggests that consideration should be given to a review of the number of negative votes that can constitute a veto in the Council, and that additionally a formula should be worked out under which a Council veto can be overridden by a certain number of votes in the General Assembly. But whatever decision is arrived at on the scope and parameters of the veto, it must be extended to any new permanent members of the Council in order to conform to the principles of equity and sovereign equality which are the bedrock of the Charter of the Organization.

The question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council has now been under general discussion for over three years now. We feel that the time has come for serious negotiations to commence with a view to arriving at a consensus within a specified time-frame. Of course, we recognize the complex nature of the subject, but we are ready to join in any creative efforts towards working out a meaningful compromise that would respond to our common objectives.

Mr. Gorelik (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): Today's discussion confirms, if confirmation were needed, that the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council remains the central issue among all the problems relating to the reorganization of the United

Nations. This subject has not only a definite political dimension but a tangible moral and psychological one as well. The membership of the Security Council should adequately reflect the vast changes in the world as well as the impressive increase in the number of United Nations Member States in recent decades. There is already a consensus on this in the Organization.

We believe that modest but tangible progress resulted from the thorough consideration of the question of an increase in the membership of the Security Council that took place in the Open-ended Working Group during the fiftieth session of the General Assembly. This is reflected in the generally high-quality and balanced report of the Group, which neither glosses over nor dramatizes the remaining substantial divergence of views.

Some States are obviously striving to find specific solutions in the near future. Existing differences of opinion, however, cannot be overcome by prodding the discussion or by artificially rushing the inevitably complex search for consensus. More time is needed. Not all delegations are happy with this, but there is no other solution.

The Working Group's report confirms that a number of States are not prepared to adopt final positions because of linkages between the size and composition of the Security Council and other matters within the mandate of the Working Group. This reminds us once again that any progress towards resolving the question of an increase in the membership of the Security Council can be achieved only on the basis of realism and a readiness to compromise.

The present format for considering this issue in the Working group is, in our view, the best one. It provides a flexible framework for reaching consensus and, at the same time, maintains the informal nature of the discussion, which is useful at this stage. We are convinced that attempts to formalize the discussion or to squeeze it into an arbitrary negotiating format, which inevitably distances us from the consensual foundation of the Working Group, are counter-productive.

Progress towards resolving the question of an increase in the membership of the Security Council depends on the efforts of all interested States, whatever their size or their status in the United Nations system. There should be no division between those who lead and those who are led. The assumption that any party should bear particular responsibility for slow progress is, in our view, incorrect.

Our delegation notes with satisfaction that the Working Group has increasingly been steering its activities towards achievable goals. Extreme and unilinear scenarios for modifying the membership of the Security Council have been gradually receding in the course of this process. This trend was reflected in the Group's report, particularly with regard to rejecting the so-called quick fix option, which essentially implies the granting of permanent residence permits in the Security Council to two developed countries only.

The other important sign that realism is gaining ground is a clear reference in the report of the Group to the fact that efforts relating to increasing the membership of the Security Council and enhancing its working methods are closely linked to preserving and strengthening the Council's efficiency. This approach is consistent with the long-standing position of the Russian Federation.

With regard to the Council's decision-making mechanism, we venture to hope that stereotyped viewpoints will be toned down in the discussions within the Working Group. We believe that critics of Security Council activities are sometimes seeking to provide answers to imaginary rather than real questions. We are still convinced that there is no reason to modify the current status of the Security Council's permanent members, in view of the organic interconnection between their rights and their responsibilities.

We believe that an improvement in the representative character of the Security Council should be brought about on a balanced basis, taking into account the interests of all regional groups and bearing in mind, in particular, the need to expand the representation of developing countries.

We venture to hope that the forthcoming round of Working Group activities will be marked by a greater awareness of the need to retain the compact nature of the Security Council, which is so important for maintaining its working capacity. This goal would be met, in our view, by a limited increase in the membership of the Council to the level of some 20 members.

The Group will have to pay serious attention to enhancing the methods and procedures of the Security Council, including achieving greater openness. We are happy that the concrete steps recently taken by the Council members to this end, including those aimed at improving the mechanism of consultations with the

contributors of troops to peacekeeping operations, are now better understood and supported by United Nations Members. Not all find them sufficient, however. Still, these measures were dictated by life itself, and should be consolidated so as to reveal their full potential. Experience gained in the course of their implementation would serve as a basis for decisions regarding possible future steps in this area.

In conclusion, I would like to express the appreciation of the Russian delegation to the Vice-Chairmen of the Working Group, the Permanent Representatives of Finland, Mr. Breitenstein, and of Thailand, Mr. Jayanama, for their vigorous and fruitful contribution to efforts to attain our common goals.

Mr. Peleg (Israel): This is the first time that Israel has spoken here on this most important issue of enlarging the Security Council. We have carefully studied the various proposals submitted regarding the issue at hand, and we share the view that as we approach the twenty-first century, the geopolitical situation necessitates making changes in the Council. The issue is complex. It includes the relationship between the permanent and the non-permanent members of the Security Council, the size and composition of the Council, the need for geographical representation and balance, and the significance of the right of veto.

I must note that when Israel addresses the question of Security Council membership or elections to the Council, we do so as the only State Member of this Organization that cannot, even theoretically, be elected to serve on the Council. Unlike each and everyone of the 184 other United Nations Member States, Israel is denied membership in a geopolitical group.

Israel, by virtue of our geographic position, is a part of Asia, and we look forward to the day when we will be accepted into the Asian group by consensus. Unfortunately, this is not the case today, because of some Asian countries which reject our membership in the group.

In the words of the Charter, the United Nations is: "based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all its members" and on universality of membership. Distressingly, under the present circumstances, my country cannot even enjoy the privilege of being disappointed at failing to be elected a non-permanent member of the Security Council.

Israel believes that this issue should be of interest to the entire international community, for what is at issue here is not merely Israel's exclusion from a geopolitical group, but the more serious matter of a breach of the Charter, upon which this entire Organization is based.

Mr. Elaraby (Egypt) (*interpretation from Arabic*): At the outset, I should like to express my sincere thanks to the President of the General Assembly at its fiftieth session, Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral, who last year presided over the work of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council, and who was particularly dedicated to that work. I should also like to thank the two Vice-Chairmen, Ambassadors Breitenstein and Jayanama, who have presided over the work of the Working Group with great competence and a level of perseverance that won our admiration and support.

The report of the Working Group on the work of its last session shows the richness of the ideas put forward during deliberations on all the subjects under discussion. As a consequence, a consensus emerged on certain non-controversial issues, including the need to expand the Security Council and review its working methods, and to respect the principle of the sovereign equality of Members, and the need for equitable geographical distribution when expanding Council membership.

Egypt supports the statement made by the representative of Colombia on behalf of the countries of the Non-Aligned Movement. Egypt's position is an integral part of that of the Non-Aligned Movement on this issue, and can be summarized very briefly. First, we need to correct the current imbalance in the composition of the Security Council and ensure greater representation on it for non-aligned States. Secondly, we must reconsider the Security Council's relationship with the General Assembly and other bodies of the United Nations system, including the International Court of Justice and regional groups, and with countries that contribute troops for peacekeeping operations. This would ensure greater transparency and legitimacy in the Council's work, and allow us to find an appropriate formula to involve in the Council's work States that are not members, so that they too can participate in decision-making, as stipulated in Article 44 of the Charter.

Thirdly, we must respect the principle of parity and symmetry in the treatment of all items on the agenda of the Working Group, and accord equal importance to questions relating to Security Council enlargement and to

reform. Fourthly, the objective of Security Council reform is to increase the transparency of its work and enhance its effectiveness and the democratic nature of its decisions. Last but not least, we must absolutely ensure that a periodic review is held of all decisions taken in this respect.

Security Council enlargement must not lead to an increase in the number of permanent seats granted to developed States to the detriment of developing countries. We must achieve the balance that has not existed in the past. That must prevail, and that is why we established the Working Group some four years ago. The working paper submitted by Egypt on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement includes a general framework and expresses the general position of the States of the Movement with regard to the enlargement of the Council.

Our paper also makes it clear that we must correct the imbalance that exists in the Council at present, which is to the detriment of the representation of the States of the Non-Aligned Movement. At the same time, it is absolutely necessary to respect the principle of equitable geographic distribution and the sovereign equality of Member States. That is why the Non-Aligned Movement has declared that any predetermined selection of States that is to the detriment of the non-aligned countries or the developing countries would be unacceptable.

Egypt attaches particular importance to the expansion of the Security Council. This is an extremely sensitive issue for us all, and we must not be too quick to adopt truncated or partial solutions. That is why negotiations must continue in good faith and with an open mind so that agreement can be reached on an overall solution that the majority can accept. We do not agree with what have been called quick-fix solutions. We ask all those who are inclined to such quick fix solutions to reconsider their positions.

I should like to refer to the statement made by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Egypt during the fiftieth session of the General Assembly, in which he affirmed the role played by Egypt in African and Asian bodies, in the Non-Aligned Movement, in the Middle East and elsewhere, and referred to Egypt's specific contribution to the United Nations. This role would place Egypt at the forefront of countries ready to shoulder increased responsibilities in a renewed, more balanced Security Council.

In this context, we might consider an appropriate formula that would make it possible to respect equitable criteria for an increase in the membership of the Security Council. Egypt believes that, above all, it is necessary to display the utmost realism and to respect contemporary realities. Some States play an extremely active role, and bear the weight of regional responsibility. Such responsibility varies from one region to another, but it is nonetheless important. We must also respect the principle of sovereign equality so as to give the largest possible number of States an opportunity to be members of the Security Council within a democratic framework. It is also necessary to take into consideration the fact that the non-aligned countries represent the numerical majority in contemporary society. The most basic democratic principles demand that we should respect the numerical majority.

Furthermore, we must not neglect another dimension of our contemporary world fraught with complexities: the great majority of crises and problems currently threatening international peace and security are taking place in the territories of non-aligned countries, and most often involve countries of the third world. It is imperative to increase the number of non-aligned members of the Council in order that it may benefit from their vitality and from the contribution they can make towards resolving these disputes and crises. This is a factor that will assuredly enhance the effectiveness and credibility of the Security Council and strengthen its decisions.

In the light of all I have said, Egypt believes that, if we are to implement all of these criteria realistically, we must consider creating new seats for a restricted number of States from each region. Such an arrangement could allow the largest possible number of States to play a role within the Security Council. Egypt has also raised the idea of rotation within each region and, in this context, would like to address the question of the consensus that prevails in the Organization of African Unity on Africa's right to hold two permanent seats on the renewed Security Council.

It should be recognized that there are two major obstacles in the way of expansion. First, there are bound to be negative repercussions on the work of the Security Council because of the increased number of States that might exercise the right of veto. Secondly, it has been difficult to reach agreement on the right of the third world to permanent seats on the Security Council because of the diverse circumstances and situations of individual countries and because of the differences between Asia, Africa and Latin America. That is why I believe that it would be better at the next stage of negotiations for us to reflect on the idea put forward by some States, including Italy, to identify a new method for choosing certain States

that have particular importance in their region and could assume special responsibilities for the maintenance of peace, strictly within a democratic framework. Their increased responsibilities would also reflect the realities of today's world.

As regards the review of the Council's working methods, Egypt would like to refer to the voting system in that organ, which remains temporary because we have not been able to reach agreement on clear criteria for distinguishing between procedural and substantive issues. Fifty years after the creation of the United Nations, the rules of procedure of the Council are still provisional. In this respect, as coordinator of the non-aligned countries and on their behalf, Egypt submitted a document on the question of the increase in the membership of the Security Council, elucidating the Movement's position on the right of veto. This paper affirmed that it is high time for the General Assembly to study the scope of application of the right of veto in a coherent and comprehensive way in order to standardize the procedures and restrict the scope. Nonetheless, day after day, we see new abuses of the right of veto. Suffice it to mention the great media uproar prompted by one permanent member of the Security Council recently in connection with the re-election of the Secretary-General, as though this question involved a threat to international peace and security and the choice of a Secretary-General of the United Nations had suddenly become the cornerstone of international relations and the key to the door to international peace and security.

The Charter contains no provision giving a blank cheque to members of the Council in its recommendation to the General Assembly regarding the re-election of a Secretary-General. Nonetheless, we have seen this phenomenon in the Security Council. In the final analysis, the appointment of a Secretary-General is a prerogative of the General Assembly. It is certainly a curious paradox — one that will go down in the annals of history — that the State now threatening to exercise its right of veto against the re-election of the Secretary-General is the same State that, in 1950, presented a constitutional and legal advisory opinion aimed at strengthening the authority of the General Assembly and asking that the role of the Security Council be disregarded in this respect. How things have changed.

Egypt wishes to stress that it is also absolutely essential to take another look at the way in which decisions are adopted in the Security Council and to broaden the process of consultation with States that are at the centre of certain events under discussion in the Council. I have referred to Article 44 of the Charter, which advocates consultations with Member States, and to Article 50, which says that if a State finds itself confronted with special economic problems arising from the carrying out of measures adopted by the Council under Chapter VII, that State shall be consulted. Such consultation has yet to take place, either under Article 44 or Article 50.

Egypt advocates the broadening of consultations with States that are not members of the Council. Regional organizations should also be involved, especially those from regions at the heart of problems under discussion in the Council, and particularly when questions are involved that could lead to the deployment of United Nations peacekeeping forces.

In conclusion, there can be no doubt that the Working Group has discussed a number of essential ideas without which it would be impossible to continue negotiations in that forum in a positive way. This in itself is promising. I cannot conclude my statement without commending once again the efforts made by the two Vice-Chairmen, the Ambassadors of Finland and Thailand. My delegation pledges to cooperate with them in order to make further progress on these vital issues at the current session.

Mr. Abulhasan (Kuwait) *(interpretation from Arabic)*: The question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council is of an importance commensurate with the role and vital responsibilities of the Council in maintaining international peace and security. My delegation has followed with great interest the discussions of the Open-ended Working Group at the past three sessions. As is well known, it has not been possible to reach a consensus on the enlargement of the membership of the Security Council or on other matters related to improved working methods, despite the numerous meetings held by the Working Group over the past three years.

Kuwait's interest in the current discussions on increasing the membership of the Security Council arises from its desire to preserve the effectiveness and capacity of that important organ in maintaining international peace and security. That was very apparent in the Security Council's efforts in confronting and dealing with the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. The effectiveness and speed demonstrated by the Security Council in reaction to the Iraqi aggression and occupation in 1990 through to the liberation of Kuwait in 1991, and its determination to ensure the implementation of all its relevant resolutions, should be preserved and enhanced to serve as a deterrent

to the aggressive violation by States of the principles of international law and the United Nations Charter and to threats to international peace and security.

Kuwait shares the interests, concerns and ambitions of other small countries regarding the current discussion on the enlargement of the membership of the Security Council. Small countries should not be the victims of any agreements reached in the Working Group. Any failure to consider the aspirations, ambitions and objectives of small countries could lead to a Security Council lacking balance, democracy and full legitimacy. We therefore hope that the basic principles proposed and confirmed by the Non-Aligned Movement — sovereign equality among all Member States and equitable geographical distribution — will be adhered to.

Kuwait supports an increase in the membership of the Security Council for many reasons. The enormous increase in the membership of the United Nations, international developments and a new world reality that has generated many challenges require United Nations organs, particularly the Security Council, to adapt to those challenges. My delegation believes that any increase in Security Council membership should aim at the following goals and objectives: first, to strengthen and enhance the Security Council, enabling it to assume its enormous responsibilities for maintaining international peace and security; secondly, to reflect in its new composition the current reality of the international community and the General Assembly, which now has a membership of 185 Member States; thirdly, to give added weight to the Security Council's decisions and to strengthen its authority and credibility; fourthly, to implement the principle of equitable geographical representation and to enhance the Council's democratic and representative aspect; and fifthly, to maintain the Council's effectiveness and efficiency and to ensure that an increase in membership does not weaken its actions.

Kuwait believes that there are several countries that have proven, through their relations with the United Nations, that they are capable of assuming the main responsibilities of maintaining international peace and security and of assisting in achieving the United Nations objectives in the political, economic, social and cultural fields through their participation in peacekeeping operations and their considerable financial contributions to the various budgets of these operations and to the regular United Nations budget.

We therefore believe that it is only fair that these countries be given special consideration, since they meet the criteria necessary to fulfil the role expected of them. In this regard, my delegation believes that the Italian proposal on an increase in non-permanent seats merits further consideration, interest and study. At the same time, we draw attention to Tunisia's valuable proposal and believe that it, too, merits serious consideration.

As for the reform and improvement of the Security Council's working methods and its relations with other United Nations organs, in particular the General Assembly, Kuwait supports all proposals aimed at providing increased transparency and clarity in the work of the Security Council and an increased flow of information to and from the Member States. We also affirm the need for the Security Council continuously and systematically to consult with States directly or indirectly interested in and concerned with the issues and conflicts under discussion, as this practice would enhance the legitimacy and the credibility of Security Council decisions on such issues.

We also call on the Security Council to develop and implement consultation procedures with the States contributing to peacekeeping operations and urge that such cooperation, coordination and consultation be maintained through all stages of peacekeeping operations. The Security Council should regularly inform the troop-contributing countries on the political and security developments that may be of interest to them.

As for the question of the veto, my delegation considers that there have been several constructive and objective proposals that merit serious consideration, within the framework of the Working Group, in the search for a consensus formula that satisfies all parties and will ensure the Security Council's ability to carry out its tasks without hindrance.

Finally, we hope that the efforts and discussions of the Working Group will be crowned with the success of a consensus that ensures and enhances the role of the Security Council in maintaining international peace and security and allows the Council to benefit from past experience in dealing with current events and facing future challenges.

The President took the Chair.

Programme of work

The President: I have an announcement to make in connection with the election of the five members of the

International Court of Justice, which is scheduled to take place on Wednesday, 6 November. I should like to draw the Assembly's attention to the relevant documents.

First, document A/51/333-S/1996/722 sets out the composition of the Court and the procedure for the election in the General Assembly and in the Security Council.econdly, document A/51/335-S/1996/724 contains the curricula vitae of the candidates. Thirdly, document A/51/334-S/1996/723 contains the list of candidates submitted within the required time for submission; and, finally, document A/51/417-S/1996/794 and Add.1 contains additional nominations received after 31 August 1996.

In this regard, an additional nomination has been received since the issuance of the documents I have just mentioned. As members are aware, additional nominations are submitted in support of candidatures presented within the established deadline.

In order to facilitate the preparation and conduct of the election procedure, it would seem desirable that the Assembly have before it, as it has in the past, a consolidated and updated list of candidates. Accordingly, if there is no objection, I shall request the Secretariat to issue a consolidated and updated list of candidates under the symbol A/51/334/Rev.1-S/1996/723/Rev.1, so as to reflect all the information received since the issuance of the original list and thus facilitate the election for all representatives.

If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Assembly so decides.

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.

United Nations A/51/PV.46

General Assembly

Official Records

Fifty-first Session

46th plenary meeting
Wednesday, 30 October 1996, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Razali Ismail ..... (Malaysia)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Erwa (Sudan), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 47 (*continued*)

Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters

Mr. Baumanis (Latvia): We are considering today the report and the addendum thereto of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council (A/50/47 and Add.1), which contain 15 reform proposals by Member States, as well as a description of measures already adopted by the Security Council to enhance its working methods and procedures. The two documents together constitute a very useful summary of the current status of the debate on the reform of the Security Council.

The Chairman of the Working Group, President Freitas do Amaral, and especially the two Vice-Chairmen, Mr. Breitenstein and Mr. Jayanama, deserve our deep gratitude for their competent, patient and untiring leadership of the Working Group.

Although initiatives to reform the Security Council have a history as long as the history of the United Nations itself, the current effort to reform the Security Council is the result of the end of the cold war.

The Working Group has made rather limited progress during the three years of its existence. During the fiftieth session of the General Assembly the Working Group reaffirmed the preliminary agreement reached in the previous session that the Security Council had to be expanded. The Group also agreed on the reasons why the expansion was needed. Views continued to differ on other matters, such as the size and composition of the Council and the right to veto.

The delegation of Latvia believes that the Member States have a collective responsibility to explore all possibilities for using the current partial agreement to reach consensus. When the Group resumes its work next year the time may be ripe to begin a systematic discussion of the procedure for implementing reform, since, in our view, the possibilities for debate on the controversial subjects were essentially exhausted during the preceding session.

One procedural possibility that appears promising to our delegation is a long-term, multi-stage procedure for expanding and changing the composition of the Security Council. The Group could, for example, explore a procedure that would make no changes with regard to the right to veto during the first stage of expansion, but would respond to the new situation created by the many, mostly small, States that have recently joined the United Nations.

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This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, *within one month of the date of the meeting*, to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, Room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

Two observations should be made with regard to the proposal for gradual reform. First, a long-term, multi-stage approach is generally recognized as practical with regard to other controversial and complex processes, for example, general nuclear disarmament. Secondly, to arrive at consensus it would be most essential that during the first stage Member States would not need to make permanent and irreversible commitments on the controversial issues — the composition of the Security Council, the use of the veto, and also the ultimate size of the Council.

Our delegation would also like to draw the attention of the General Assembly to the fact that the end of the cold war led to an increase in the number of Member States in the Eastern European Group of States. However, the number of seats allocated to the Group in many United Nations bodies has not changed. In this regard, we support the view of the delegation of Ukraine that

> "any expansion of the Security Council should take into account the legitimate interests of the Eastern European regional group, which has more than doubled its membership in recent years". (*Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-first Session, Plenary Meetings, 44th meeting, p. 2*)

My delegation offers its modest proposals for serious consideration by other delegations and is ready to cooperate with them.

Mr. Abdellah (Tunisia) (*interpretation from French*): Allow me first to pay a tribute to Ambassador Breitenstein of Finland and Ambassador Jayanama of Thailand for their tireless efforts at the head of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council. Their perseverance has enabled the Group to overcome many of the difficulties it faced during the past year and to submit to us a report that is, in substance, different from earlier reports.

I also wish to endorse the statement made by the Ambassador of Colombia on behalf of the members of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

The report stresses that the discussions held this year have made it possible better to understand and clarify the questions before the Group. It is also clear that agreement was reached on many points but that on other points major differences remain.

In fact, there is agreement on the need to review the membership of the Security Council in the light of the considerable increase in the membership of the Organization, in particular of the developing countries, in order to make it a more representative body. There is also a need to review the Council's functioning and its working methods in order to make them more effective and more transparent. There is further agreement on the principles that should guide the reform process, namely, the sovereign equality of States, equitable geographical representation and contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security. In addition to those principles there are also the principles of democracy, legitimacy, effectiveness and transparency.

However, there is also a majority trend that rejects any increase in the membership of the Security Council that would exclude the non-aligned countries. That trend holds that if there is no agreement on the other categories of membership, the increase should affect only the non-permanent members. But let us make no mistake: this does not mean that there is a dominant trend in favour of increasing only the non-permanent membership. It merely means that if the increase in the number of permanent members were to involve only the developed countries, such an increase would be unacceptable.

Of course differences remain, and they have to do in particular with the basic question of the veto. Here again, there is a majority for whom the veto should be, if not eliminated, at least regulated in such a way as to restrict its use.

The report notes the progress made with regard to the second part of the reform, that is, the working methods of the Council. At the urging of the Group, the Security Council has adopted certain measures to improve transparency in its work. However, to make those measures effective they must be institutionalized and backed up by further, bolder steps. Proposals have been made by the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, by the Czech Republic, by Argentina and by New Zealand. We hope that when the Group resumes its work it will give them all due attention.

The high quality of the discussions and the contributions by various States attest to the fact that after three years of intensive, in-depth deliberations ideas have matured. We are convinced that the time has come to move on to a new stage, that of concretization.

Although, owing to what we view as an exaggerated — to say the least — regard for balance, the report gives the same weight to all the proposals submitted during the course of the Group's work, we feel that among them there are some that deserve special attention. I refer to the notion of rotating permanent regional seats. That proposal is not only supported by its sponsors and the countries members of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), which are using it as a basis for claiming two permanent seats for Africa, but by many other countries as well. It is at the origin of other proposals along the same lines, which gives it a more generalized scope that affects other regions. Many believe that this proposal affords a real opportunity for the participation, for the first time, of the developing countries in a club that has heretofore been closed to them.

While we support the accession of Germany and Japan to permanent membership in the Security Council, given their economic and political importance, we believe that Africa, Asia and Latin America, which are under-represented in the Council, should be given seats in the same category as well as in the non-permanent category. That is the whole *raison d'être* of the reform process.

Those who are against an increase in the number of permanent members maintain that it would merely be tantamount to an extension of the privileges of permanent membership. However, by advocating the status quo, are we not attempting to perpetuate the existing imbalance in the Council to the disadvantage of the developing countries?

The concept of rotating permanent regional representation, as developed by Tunisia over the past three years, seems to us best to respond to the new realities of our world, a feature of which is the emergence of regional groupings. The Charter of the United Nations itself encourages regional efforts in the context of the peaceful settlement of disputes. Let us not forget that the Security Council acts on behalf of the Members of the United Nations. In other words, in their decisions the members of the Security Council must take into account the collective interest. We believe that this interest would be better served by the formula that we advocate. The system of periodic elections of the permanent members that this proposal would establish — the candidate being first selected by its region and then endorsed by the General Assembly — would make the decisions of the Council less dependent on the strictly national interests of those members. Looking further forward, all permanent members should be nominated by their respective regions and elected by the General Assembly.

It is difficult for us to imagine a more democratic system, which would involve the participation of all, without any kind of discrimination. Our approach is an important stage in the attainment of the ultimate goal, which remains the establishment of a Security Council that is totally representative and democratic.

Mr. Owada (Japan): At the outset, I wish to offer my congratulations to the President of the General Assembly, Ambassador Razali, on his recent assumption of the chairmanship of the Open-ended Working Group. I should like also to pay high tribute to its two co-Vice-Chairmen, Ambassador Breitenstein of Finland and Ambassador Jayanama of Thailand, for their unflagging commitment and inspired leadership throughout the year.

For the last three years, the entire United Nations membership has been engaged in a soul-searching exercise on how to make the United Nations stronger, more effective, and more responsive to the new international environment born out of the demise of the cold war. The reform of the Security Council, one of the most important items on the agenda for strengthening the United Nations, is vital in this context to the long-range viability of the Organization.

With the end of the cold war, the United Nations has appeared on centre stage as the single most important international institution with the potential for pursuing the interrelated and mutually dependent goals of peace and prosperity throughout the globe. With the dissolution of the bipolar structure of international relations and the proliferation of local and regional conflicts, countries in various parts of the world are turning increasingly to the United Nations — and particularly to the Security Council — for their own security. The question is whether this Organization can live up to this expectation of the world. Unless the Council is thoroughly reformed and reconstituted, it will be unable to meet the challenges that lie ahead. All of us as Members of the United Nations should realize that the Organization is truly at a major crossroads in its 50-year history. If through reforming and revitalizing the Organization, we succeed in realizing the potential that it possesses, the United Nations can truly play a central role in the international order in this new international environment. Thus Japan believes that this is a crucial moment for the future destiny of the United Nations and that we must reject an attempt to indulge in power games based on narrow

parochial interests of individual States. If the United Nations simply engages in repetitious debate and proves incapable of reforming itself to adapt to the changing times, its very credibility could be severely undermined. It is thus incumbent upon the membership as a whole to be tenacious in its efforts to achieve reform.

While the position of the Government of Japan on the question of Security Council reform has been elaborated on previous occasions, I believe it is useful to mention several salient points to which it attaches particular importance. At the outset, let me state once again that our ultimate objective in reforming the Security Council is to create a stronger, more credible Council by enhancing its legitimacy and effectiveness. A package of reforms must therefore be devised which includes the following elements.

First, in order to ensure the Council's effectiveness, a limited increase in its permanent membership should be realized through the inclusion of countries — both developed and developing — which have both the capacity and the willingness to assume global responsibilities for the maintenance of international peace and security. As to the modality for the permanent representation of the developing regions of Asia, Africa, and Latin America and the Caribbean, I am of the view that this might be left to the regions themselves to determine. A rotational representation system might, as an interim arrangement, provide a realistic solution.

Secondly, in view of the dramatically expanded membership of the United Nations as a whole, it is necessary to enhance the representativeness of the Security Council by adding an appropriate number of non-permanent seats. I would emphasize that, in expanding the Council, utmost care should be taken so as to ensure that a balance is maintained between the need for enhanced legitimacy and the need for greater effectiveness.

Thirdly, taking into account the newly created balance in the geographical distribution of States in the world, the geographical imbalance that now exists in the Council as a whole should be redressed, with particular attention given to the regions that are currently under-represented.

Japan wishes to make clear its position that a reform plan must include all three of these elements. Anything less would not lead to our goal of recreating a United Nations capable of carrying out its expected role in the new world. For that reason, the proposal that has been made to increase only the Council's non-permanent membership category would not be acceptable. Japan calls upon Member States to recognize that the reform must be both genuine and comprehensive, and to commit themselves to achieving that objective.

Throughout the four decades of its membership, Japan has consistently committed itself to the United Nations as one of the pillars of Japan's diplomacy. Japan has faithfully provided major financial support to the Organization and has been increasingly active in its participation in the peace efforts of the United Nations in various parts of the world. It has been second to none in the promotion of disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. What is even more important in the present state of the world, Japan is proud to be at the forefront of the initiative to promote prosperity through a new strategy for development, which Japan regards as the number one priority issue that the world faces as we move into the twenty-first century.

Against this background, Japan is grateful for its recent election to a two-year term on the Security Council, and welcomes its membership as an opportunity to enhance its contributions to the work of the Organization. In order to engage more fully in efforts to secure world peace and prosperity, Japan, with the endorsement of many countries, is resolved to work for the United Nations by discharging its responsibilities as a permanent member of the Security Council. I should like on this occasion to express once again my appreciation to those countries that have endorsed Japan in its resolve to assume such responsibilities.

Another important goal of Security Council reform is the improvement of its working methods, particularly in terms of greater transparency and efficiency. Japan believes that this is an endeavour on which the members of the Council and the wider United Nations membership should work together, inasmuch as improved working methods will redound to the benefit of the Council itself as well as to the United Nations membership as a whole. I am pleased to note that the Security Council has in fact introduced helpful changes in this regard. More needs to be done, however. Improving the two-way flow of communication between the Security Council and countries that are not members but wish to be kept informed of or wish to have an input into the work of the Council is an especially important element. It is a task to which Japan intends to devote its energies when it joins the Council next January.

The Open-ended Working Group on the Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the

Security Council and Other Related Matters has been engaged in its task for three full years. Its efforts gained considerable momentum last year during the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. As indicated in the report of the Working Group, its discussions during the fiftieth session were

> "useful in contributing to a better understanding and increased clarity of many issues involved." *(A/50/47, para. 18)*

The fundamental objectives of Security Council reform were reaffirmed and the groundwork was laid for the continuation of its work during the current session.

However, it would be well to remember that we have already been engaged in this exercise for three years. Over this long period of time we have identified the issues, digested them and negotiated on them. We are now in a race with time in our attempt to bring about a genuine reform of the United Nations to match the demands of the new era. In any serious exercise for reform, there comes a moment when we have to move toward a conclusion on the basis of political will. Japan is determined to work with other Member States to maintain the momentum in our work and to build on the progress that has been made thus far in order to reach agreement on the major elements of reform. At the same time, I should like to stress that the Working Group should think seriously about how to come to a conclusion to our exercise. After such a long and elaborate discussion on the many salient issues involved, my delegation believes that the moment of truth is approaching when we, as a collectivity representing this Organization, will have to take a political decision.

The reform of the Security Council is but one part of the threefold effort to revitalize the United Nations; reforms are also called for in the administrative and financial as well as the economic and social areas.

The importance which Japan attaches to the work and purposes of the United Nations is amply demonstrated, I believe, in both the level as well as the substance of its contributions. As such, Japan has been closely involved in efforts to reform the administration and financing of the Organization. Moreover, as the largest donor of development assistance, Japan is taking creative initiatives for the development of developing countries, which represent two thirds of the United Nations membership.

Japan's involvement in the full range of United Nations activities may be expected to increase in the coming years. It is for this reason that my Government attaches such profound importance to genuine and comprehensive reform of the entire system. Only by carrying out reforms in a balanced and organic manner can the legitimacy and effectiveness of the Organization be strengthened. If we settle for merely a partial reform of the Security Council, we will not achieve our goal of enhancing the legitimacy and effectiveness of the United Nations. This would be most unfortunate for the Organization and, indeed, for all its Member States, including Japan. It would also make it extremely difficult to sustain public support for Japan's increasing level of involvement in United Nations activities. Thus it is my Government's earnest hope that Member States will rededicate themselves to the task at hand, so as to ensure that this unique and precious Organization remains both relevant and vibrant well into the next century.

Mr. Azwai (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) *(interpretation from Arabic)*: Our discussion of the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council comes in the midst of other similar discussions inside and outside this Assembly. The active participation in the debate on this item confirms the fact that this is one of the most important questions for Member States, convinced as they are that any genuine reform of the United Nations would be incomplete unless accompanied by changes in the composition of the Security Council that reflect the realities of today's world.

We are now on the threshold of a new round of negotiations and we are gravely concerned at the major obstacles that have hampered the realization of any concrete progress in this process, in which Member States have been engaged for approximately three years. We are hopeful that the coming consultations will overcome these obstacles and embody the political will expressed by the leaders of the world during the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, as well as their affirmation that the expansion of the Security Council is a basic condition for making its membership more representative and its working methods more transparent.

The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya has explained its position on this item in previous debates here in the Assembly and in the consultations held in the Open-ended Working Group. However, the importance of this question requires us to restate our views once again.

In this context, my delegation believes that the increase in the membership of the Security Council should reflect the considerable increase in the membership of the United Nations. In our view, the principle of equitable geographical distribution should be given priority in this respect, since the current situation reflects an overrepresentation of certain regions while others are under-represented. This runs counter to provisions of the Charter, in particular Article 23.

In my delegation's view, however, the increase must be limited to the non-permanent category of membership. There is no need for more permanent members, which would only perpetuate the continued discrimination among members of the United Nations. If there is indeed a need for an increase in the number of permanent members, this increase should not be decided in advance because it might limit that category to the rich and the powerful. The right thing to do is to apply to the permanent membership the same principle of equitable geographical distribution, taking into consideration, first, the situation of the under-represented region — Asia — and the regions that are not represented at all among the permanent members: Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean. Once again, my delegation reaffirms the need to select any new permanent members on the basis of a regional perspective and in accordance with arrangements to be agreed upon within each region.

The increase in the membership of the Security Council is dictated by many factors, the most important of which is the large increase in the membership of the United Nations since the last expansion of the Council. In addition, my delegation once again stresses its view that mere change in the composition of the Council will not be sufficient unless it is coupled with drastic changes in the Council's methods of work. Many proposals have been submitted on this matter, some of which have been implemented by the Security Council. However, our impression is that the Security Council continues to be discriminatory in its dealings with Member States. For example, it now holds regular consultations with countries contributing troops to peacekeeping operations, but does not consult with others directly interested in questions under consideration in the Council. This method can only be described as a rejection of transparency and a contradiction of the spirit and provisions of the Charter, and in particular Article 31.

Informal consultations remain the rule, not the exception. Despite the fact that the Security Council has increasingly resorted to open, formal meetings, the discussions in such meetings are not usefully organized. Since the format of the debates in these meetings is determined in advance in most cases, consultations are limited to a small number of countries in a manner tending to confirm the impression that one country, or a few permanent member States exercise exclusive control over decision-making in the Council.

My delegation is fully convinced that many delegations, including those of countries represented in the Security Council, share our concerns. Some have already expressed their views in this respect, calling for the establishment of a rule to guarantee the holding of consultations with countries affected by any question being considered by the Council. In drafting its resolutions, the Council should take into consideration the views of Member States expressed in open formal debates. In our opinion, the Council can implement the improvements suggested. The problem, however, is that certain members of the Council do not want any reform. Their only concern is to maintain the status quo because of the influence it affords them.

Despite all the obstacles set up by those countries in the face of any attempt at reform, we are extremely hopeful that the will of the majority will prevail and that the Security Council will implement measures allowing it to work in a democratic, transparent manner and to establish stronger relations with the other organs of the United Nations, especially the General Assembly, to which it is accountable as the sole organ in which all Member States are equally represented.

The reform process should also include, in my delegation's opinion, total neutrality in the Council's work. The Council should not exercise double standards in the performance of its functions. It should always keep in mind the fact that it acts on behalf of all Members of the United Nations and that it is not the trustee of these Members. The Security Council has to carry out its mandate in conformity with the provisions of the Charter and should not encroach on the functions of other organs, such as the International Court of Justice.

Members of the Council should be cautious and not allow any country to manoeuvre it into approving its own plans and designs. They should remain alert, lest such a country exploit the Council for achieving its own purposes and preconceived objectives. One such country has already done so, having succeeded on several occasions in using the Council as a tool to punish several peoples, including the Libyan people. It prompted the

Council to impose sanctions on the Libyan people before exhausting the options for the peaceful settlement of disputes and without resorting to the means provided for in the United Nations Charter for resolving disputes among nations. The United States has acknowledged that its Administration has used the Security Council as an instrument of its foreign policy. This is a clear demonstration of what we have just stated.

A review of the veto power is one of the basic elements of Security Council reform since it has a direct bearing on the decision-making process. The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya has always expressed its firm objection to the veto, which invalidates the principle of the equality of States guaranteed by the Charter. It also contradicts values of justice and undermines the principles of democracy. Moreover, it is being abused in the service of selfish interests. Over the years, a few individual countries have adduced many arguments to justify the maintenance of the veto power. We have been told that bearing a bigger share in the budget of the Organization is one of the criteria for permanent membership in the Security Council, and consequently, the enjoyment of the veto power.

This criterion does not stand scrutiny, either logically or factually. There are many countries that could pay more in order to enjoy that privilege. Even if we accepted the validity of this criterion for argument's sake, we might ask how this criterion could be valid for a country whose arrears in its assessments to the budget of the Organization are close to $1 billion. We are also told that the veto power was granted to countries that bear greater responsibilities for the maintenance of international peace and security. Once again, we ask if this does not run counter to the actions of a certain country that enjoys the veto power and used it to shield itself against condemnation when it committed its treacherous aggression against my country, which had never threatened anybody or acted in a manner to jeopardize international peace and security.

Furthermore, how can we accept the justifications for maintaining this privilege, which is being intentionally used in the service of selfish interest? The same country that depended on the power of veto 10 years ago to protect it from condemnation now relies on it in rejecting, together with another permanent member, all proposals aimed at settling their dispute with my country over what has become known as the Lockerbie crisis. If the granting of the veto power was truly based on greater responsibilities for maintaining international security, the two countries should have accepted the resolution of this crisis through the proper channels by resorting to international agreements and conventions instead of politicizing the dispute then seeking to escalate it by opposing any attempt to lift the sanctions imposed on the Libyan people. They even insist on extending the duration of these sanctions as long as possible. They are trying to punish the Libyan people for nothing more than its decision to live freely on its land, under the sun, and to reject policies of humiliation and attempts at subjugation.

The fact is that the victors of 1945 gave themselves special privileges. However, today's United Nations is different from the that of 50 years ago. One of the most important manifestations of a changed United Nations is that most States represented in this Assembly today were not members of the Organization at its inception and had no say in the privileges granted to five countries. All of this leads us to one conclusion, which my country proclaimed a quarter of a century ago and reaffirms today: The veto power must be repealed. It is no longer acceptable for a few countries to wield a privilege that they use to impose their hegemony on the destiny of the world and to control international decisions, making of this privilege an eternal right similar to the divine rights of monarchs in the Middle Ages.

At the last session, the General Assembly's Open-ended Working Group played an important role. On this occasion, my delegation would like to thank the Chairman and the two Vice-Chairmen of the Group for their contributions to the contents of the report, published in document A/50/47. The Open-ended Working Group will continue its work at this session under the wise chairmanship of the Assembly's President, assisted by his two able Vice-Chairmen. We hope that the Group will benefit from the views expressed during this debate and that its future consultations will lead to a consensus on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters quickly, successfully and democratically.

In conclusion, we believe that the Italian proposal must be seriously considered, because it contains many noteworthy ideas.

Mr. Ho (Singapore): At the outset, I would like to thank the Co-Vice-Chairmen of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council, the Permanent Representative of Thailand, Ambassador Jayanama, and the Permanent Representative of Finland,

Ambassador Breitenstein, for their leadership and skill in guiding the discussions in the Working Group.

Singapore's consistent position on Security Council reform was most recently and clearly reiterated in the speech of my Foreign Minister during the general debate on 26 September 1996. I will not repeat what he said at that time; I will instead elaborate on some points arising from this year's report of the Working Group.

Some delegations have expressed concern about the pace of progress in the Working Group. They have expressed disappointment that more has not been achieved. Of course, we all wish that more could have been done. But in fact, while progress has been gradual, it has not been inconsiderable. There is nothing unusual about the length of our discussions or about the fact that there has not yet been consensus on many issues. The Charter was drafted at the end of the Second World War, when its outcome was already clear. War brings a terrifyingly simple clarity to even the most complex political matters. Nevertheless, two of the major victors, the Soviet Union and the United Kingdom, were sceptical of Roosevelt's view of China's ability to play a major role in the post-war world. Churchill's insistence on including France among the permanent members was met with the same scepticism by Roosevelt and Stalin. Today, in a world fraught with post-cold-war ambiguity and complexity, and because the cold war ended without the clarity of the Second World War, it is not surprising that we have not found it easy to decide who should belong to the new elite.

The only previous reform of the Security Council began at the 1956 session of the General Assembly. At stake then was a relatively simple issue: an increase in non-permanent seats. It took seven years to reach agreement in 1963 on this relatively straightforward point and two more years before the agreement came into force, almost a decade after the process began. The lapse of time reflects the political sensitivity of even a relatively straightforward change. This is understandable, because the Security Council is the most important organ of the United Nations, evoking the vital national interests of all members.

It is only by placing this Working Group's discussions in their proper historical context that we are able properly to evaluate the current state of play. Three years is not a long time. The issues that we are discussing today are far more complex than those previously discussed. The international situation in which we operate is also far more complex. Three years is too soon for us to lose patience with the progress made in the Working Group, especially since the first one-and-a-half years were spent in a necessary process of defining the problems and positioning ourselves for a more substantive discussion.

That substantive discussion has only just begun this year. Nevertheless, we have moved forward. This year's report contains broad outlines of what the reform of the Security Council should be. There is broad agreement that reform should be a comprehensive package, including permanent and non-permanent members and developed and developing countries alike, as well as substantive improvements in the Security Council's working methods.

Moreover, many specific proposals are now on the table, among them the Non-Aligned Movement proposals, the Czech proposal and the Italian proposal, to name just a few examples. To make further progress, our task now is to separate the proposals which are viable from those which may have unintended or less than obvious consequences. We must also clearly identify the political obstacles that lie ahead.

Several Member States, including some of the permanent members, have identified Germany and Japan as among the most qualified candidates in the event there is agreement on expansion of permanent members. At the same time, most of the major Powers, again including the permanent members, have been much less forthcoming on whether Germany and Japan should have the veto. This makes it all the more difficult to imagine that the major Powers would agree to give any developing country the veto, even though there is general agreement that an expansion of permanent membership by only two industrialized countries would be insufficient.

The same stubborn defence of the status quo has also been evident in our discussions on the Security Council's working methods. All but the most superficial and cosmetic changes have been resisted, even though the most interesting and useful proposals would not require any Charter amendment or in any way compromise the authority of the permanent members. This attitude casts a chilling shadow over the Working Group. Changes to the working methods of the Security Council being considered by the Working Group are the most vital issues to the small State majority of the United Nations.

In singling out the positions of the major Powers, my delegation means no more than to emphasize the political complexity and sensitivity of our effort. Our progress is real. Unfortunately, so are the obstacles.

These obstacles are real and serious. There are major States and great Powers that have yet to be convinced of the need for real and comprehensive reform. They cannot be ignored or brushed aside.

My delegation's support for a comprehensive reform of the Security Council is on record. We have also maintained that we should make progress where progress is possible. Long-awaited improvements in one area should not be held hostage by lack of agreement in another. One way out of the quandary may be, if there is no agreement for the time being on the more complex questions, to consider the non-aligned proposal as an intermediate fallback position, bearing in mind that the final outcome of this exercise should be a comprehensive package of reforms encompassing all aspects of Security Council reform. This is one of the reasons my delegation has supported proposals for a periodic review clause. Unfortunately, this is another one of the proposals that have not found favour among the major Powers.

When looking for an interim solution, we should also consider only those proposals that are viable. The proposal for regional rotational permanent representation, for instance, is not viable. Regional rotational representation may work in Africa, but no other region enjoys an established tradition of rotating regional candidatures or possesses a regional organization akin to the Organization of African Unity that encompasses the entire continent. Even the European Union, which professes to share a common foreign and security policy, would not agree to a single rotating representative in the Security Council. My delegation certainly cannot see how regional rotation can work in Asia, where it will almost certainly engender or exacerbate serious regional tensions.

Many delegations, including my own, have raised practical and conceptual questions about the proposal. These have yet to be satisfactorily answered. My delegation continues to have serious questions about the motivations of some non-African countries — and let me stress here that I fully understand the position of the African group. I am referring now only to some members of other regional groups that are pushing strongly for regional rotational permanent representation. Let us beware of the "quick fix" in another guise.

As I have stressed, we have made relatively good progress in a historically short period of time. Let us not be stampeded into hasty or ill-conceived action by an artificial sense of failure. We have not failed.

It is clear that there is a need for a comprehensive reform of the Security Council to prepare it for the twenty-first century. At the same time, we should guard against attempts to force an artificial consensus. Consensus is not unanimity. But to try and rush an artificial consensus on a politically sensitive subject will be immensely divisive and may even permanently hamstring the United Nations. I urge all delegations to continue discussions in a spirit of compromise and patience and to strive for the broadest possible agreement on the reform of the Security Council. Only through this sometimes difficult process of consensus-building can we build a truly democratic Security Council capable of meeting the challenges of the twenty-first century.

Mr. Baali (Algeria): I would like at the outset to express my most sincere appreciation to the two Vice-Chairmen of the Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council, Ambassadors Breitenstein of Finland and Jayanama of Thailand, for the extremely competent manner in which they conducted our deliberations.

I would also like fully to endorse the statement of Colombia as Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement.

These debates provide us today with an excellent opportunity to assess the progress made over the past three years and to reflect upon the prospects for reaching solutions that represent a real breakthrough in our quest for a more democratic, representative and efficient Security Council.

This objective is, alas, still very far away. Instead of making a bold movement towards general agreement on the nature and scope of the reform of the Security Council, our deliberations have in fact revealed irreconcilable differences and insuperable obstacles.

The very fact that the Working Group has limited its report this year to a mere recapitulation of the facts and a recalling of its mandate is quite illustrative of the magnitude of the divergences which have, over the years, become further exacerbated due to the contradictory and sometimes conflicting objectives that the concerned countries have been and still are pursuing.

Mr. Turnquest (Bahamas), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Furthermore, the unanimous and determined opposition of the permanent members of the Security Council to any initiative that might question in one way or another the privilege inherent to their status, as well as their rejection of any change in the use of the veto — despite the wishes of the overwhelming majority of Members States — have led to a situation in which no opening of the Council to new permanent members can be seriously envisaged, at least for the time being, especially since this enlargement is firmly opposed in principle by many delegations.

The discussions within the Working Group have demonstrated in the most evident way that the very idea of creating new permanent seats in the Security Council, with all their ensuing privileges, including the veto, for the benefit of some industrialized countries — which are already overrepresented — was unacceptable and contrary to the mandate of the Group itself.

In this respect, some objections — very valid ones for the most part — have been made in a very determined way against this proposal. Some delegations have rightly argued that the status of permanent member coupled with the veto was fundamentally incompatible with the principle of the sovereign equality of States as enshrined in the United Nations Charter.

Moreover the criterion of economic might, on which some formulas advocating this status are based, unfairly puts aside other valid criteria, such as contribution to international peace and security and promotion of the United Nations objectives.

In other words, accepting this as the sole parameter would be tantamount to recognizing the domination of the Security Council by a small group of rich and mighty countries and would be contrary to the profound aspiration of the international community to establishing a system of collective security in which a reformed, modernized and more democratic Security Council would fully take into account, with efficiency and transparency, the preoccupations and needs of all States, regardless of their size, level of development or economic conditions.

Along with the controversial issue of the possible opening of the Security Council to new permanent members, there is another essential question which raises very important political and practical problems: the veto or the rule of unanimity of the five permanent members. In fact, the question of veto is the core issue, which the Working Group has to address properly if it really wishes to make progress when dealing with the different proposals for enlargement of the Security Council on the basis of respect for the principle of equitable representation and the sovereign equality of States.

Indeed, the important qualitative changes that have occurred in international relations, together with the irreversible move made by the international community towards democracy and the achievement of consensus in multilateral forums, underline with particular emphasis the anachronistic, anti-democratic and unacceptable character of the veto.

It must also be clearly stated that the veto, a tool that was frequently resorted to during the cold war, can by no means be invested with legitimacy after the cold war through its attribution to new permanent members.

Finally, a simple reading of the provisions of the Charter, in particular Article 24, makes clear beyond any doubt that the common will of the international community represented in the United Nations cannot be defeated by a formal or disguised veto.

This means that, since the veto is the core issue, it has to be separated from the status of permanent member if we wish seriously to consider the various proposals aimed at allowing certain States or groups of States to enter the Security Council for a period of variable length and at varying frequencies.

Regarding the use of the veto, it should be recalled that the Non-Aligned Movement has made a reasonable and interesting proposal which represents a moderate and constructive translation of the position constantly reiterated at the various Non-Aligned Movement summits over the last 20 years.

By proposing that, as a first step, the use of the veto should be limited to Chapter VII of the Charter, the Movement has made the abolition of the veto the final objective. It is therefore unfortunate that this proposal, which enjoys the support of a great number of countries, including some that are not members of the Non-Aligned Movement, and which could shown the way for the modernization and democratization of the Council, has not met with approval from permanent members of the Council.

One of the objectives that we are pursuing in the Working Group is the promotion of equitable representation in the Security Council and improvement

in its working methods in order to achieve greater transparency and efficiency. The very mandate of the Working Group implies that there is a common understanding on the need to adopt a set of measures that would increase the representative nature, efficiency, transparency and credibility of the Security Council. This means that the real matter on which reform of the Security Council is based is the democratization of that body.

In this respect, the more that countries take part in the conception and creation of reform, the more the viability of these reforms will be ensured. It is therefore of the utmost importance that from now on the Working Group focus its attention on the concrete proposals made by various delegations or groups of delegations. Between the extreme positions, there is certainly room for some intermediary positions that could be acceptable to many of us. The idea of rotation — contained in the position of the Organization of African Unity, and illustrated in particular in the very attractive Italian proposal and, in a slightly different way, in the proposal of Belize — could, in this regard, be viewed with an open mind.

In this context, the idea, which appeared for the first time in last year's report, that, in case of non-agreement on an increase in other categories of membership, expansion should for the time being take place only in the non-permanent category, represents a pleasing and promising development in the sense that it could give our debates the new impetus that they so badly need.

Mr. Insanally (Guyana): I am once again honoured to address the Assembly, on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters, on behalf of the member States of the Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM) that are Members of this Organization.

This item is engaging our attention for a fourth consecutive year. While the pace of the Working Group over that time has occasioned many comments — some not very flattering — CARICOM States remain of the view that the process has been both necessary and useful. For one thing, it has clarified many complex issues and revealed the interlinkages that exist between some of them. The positions of many Member States have also risen closer to the surface and are now much more clearly defined.

As a result of the arduous but substantive discussions we have had throughout the past year, we are now beginning our deliberations on this item with a much better understanding of the task before us. As we continue to seek agreement on the many outstanding issues, we welcome the new President of the General Assembly at its fifty-first session as Chairman of the Working Group for the present session with the certainty that he will guide and inspire us in the search for a positive outcome. At the same time, we would like to place on record our appreciation of the work done by the President of the General Assembly and Chairman of the Open-ended Working Group during the fiftieth session, His Excellency Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral. We are extremely grateful also to our two Vice-Chairmen, Ambassador Breitenstein of Finland and Ambassador Jayanama of Thailand, for their strong dedication and guidance throughout the past year, and for their preparation, with the assistance of the Secretariat, of the Working Group's report and annexes as contained in documents A/50/47 and A/50/47/Add.1. We are pleased to note that both of these excellent men have agreed to continue as Vice-Chairmen for this session. Their combined leadership will be fully supported by all CARICOM member States.

As observed in the report of the Open-ended Working Group, broad consensus now exists on the need to reform and revitalize the Council. There is wide, if not universal, agreement on the need to expand the membership of the Security Council as well as to further improve its working methods. What we must do now is decide upon the modalities for enlargement to provide for equitable representation without sacrificing the efficiency of the Council.

Such expansion must be based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all States Members of the United Nations, and take fully into account the interests of all Members. As small States in our region, we will insist on our right to sit on the Council and to make our contribution to the cause of peace and security. Several of our members have served in the past with distinction and we believe that we can play an even greater role in the future.

Given the prevailing mood to democratize the Council, it is not surprising that a substantial majority of Member States, constituted largely by the Non-Aligned Movement and including CARICOM countries, would prefer to see an increase only in the category of non-permanent membership. Nor is it strange that many countries dislike the discrimination that permanent membership and its privileged right to the veto represent. Ideally, and understandably, we would prefer to see, as

in 1965, an enlargement of the non-permanent membership to make it adequately representative of the Assembly today and make the work of the Council more open and legitimate. At the same time — this has also been called for by the Non-Aligned Movement — we would hope for the use of the offensive veto to be severely restricted and eventually abolished.

A sense of realism tells us, however, that this may not be acceptable to everyone at this stage, and that some compromise may be necessary if we are to move forward. We therefore remain open to proposals that may bring about consensus without flouting the basic purpose of resolution 48/26. In this spirit of cooperation, we think that the Working Group would do well to turn its attention more closely to those documents before it that record the many ideas that have been generated in the process. We ourselves consider that several of the suggestions that have emanated from Member States, such as Italy's proposal for rotation and the thoughts of Belize on shared seats, are of considerable interest. These States have taken the trouble to research the issues, and the least we in the Working Group can do is make a proper evaluation of their ideas. The proposals for rotation and shared seats may yet hold the answer to the problem of ensuring democratic representation without creating an unwieldy and ineffective Council.

That, in essence, is our thinking on the procedure that in our view is likely to advance our progress in the months ahead. It is one that allows us the freedom to reflect further — in strict fashion, of course — on proposals already made, as well as to consider new ideas that may emerge as the process continues. I hasten to add that this process need not detain us unduly if we adopt a thematic approach — dealing with the problem issue by issue, with each one as compartmentalized as possible — rather than following a seriatim approach, dealing with each proposal in turn. Of course, we are prepared to consider any other route that can command consensus. Our paramount concern is that we should act with an urgent sense of responsibility to reform the body that is so important to global peace and security in the post-cold-war era. Admittedly, this is a task that we cannot hurry, since it requires profound and serious consideration. At the same time, the circumstances of the world today do not, in our view, allow for much delay in restructuring the United Nations to fulfil the requirements of its membership at this particular time.

The CARICOM countries are persuaded that these two approaches must be reconciled and a middle course found that would satisfy all our underlying concerns. Perhaps, as has been suggested before, this could prove acceptable if some form of periodic review could be provided for in any agreement that is eventually reached. Any such negotiated arrangement would therefore be a temporary and transitional measure, subject perhaps to readjustment after a reasonable period of time, say by the year 2015. In this fashion, Member States may be reassured that they will not be forever locked into a position of compromise, but will have the opportunity to revisit the issue at a later stage. In this regard, it is our fervent hope that this provision — or something similar — will give us the courage to break out of the current impasse and to reform the Council in the not too distant future.

Mr. Westendorp (Spain) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I would like to begin by expressing my delegation's appreciation to Mr. Freitas do Amaral for the commitment, skill and tenacity with which, as President, he guided the previous session, as well as the work of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council.

I would also like to extend my appreciation to the two Vice-Chairmen of the Working Group, Ambassador Wilhelm Breitenstein of Finland and Ambassador Asda Jayanama of Thailand, who have jointly presided over our work with great efficiency, thus helping us make progress.

In the past year the Working Group has held a host of meetings, and Member States have made many contributions and submitted many proposals. We thus have solid and varied documentation that provides a very useful basis for the continuation of our work during the current session. Now we must discuss these proposals in greater depth and try to move towards compromises that allow us to reach conclusions enjoying very broad consensus among Member States.

On various occasions Spain has pointed out that Security Council reform is a very complex matter that needs to be thought out carefully and carried out on the basis of dialogue conducive to understanding among all Member States. In such an important and serious matter, it is crucial to seek consensus.

This is the only way we can ensure that the reform enjoys the legitimacy it needs. A reform built by a mechanical majority that leaves aside a significant

minority of Member States could seriously harm the Organization.

Spain believes that in addition to the principle of legitimacy to which I have just referred, it is important that this reform also reflect two fundamental principles: efficiency and representativity. Some proposals that have been put forward are flawed by overemphasis on one principle or the other. We must therefore incorporate as much as possible of both. We believe that the proposals submitted by Spain meet this aim.

I would like to recall that my country favours a moderate increase in the membership of the Security Council. This would undoubtedly make the Council more representative, more balanced and more democratic, while at the same time preserving a composition in line with the Council's need to respond efficiently and swiftly in its deliberations and decision-making process.

Spain believes that such an increase would allow for a more frequent presence in the Council of States that have a legitimate aspiration to participate more frequently in the work of the Council, as well as of other States that, because of their importance and influence in international relations and their ability and will to contribute significantly to the maintenance of international peace and security, could make an even greater contribution to that end.

During the Working Group's meetings this year, Spain put forward a concrete proposal on some objective criteria, based on the principles established by Article 23 of the Charter, as a basis for a possible system to allow for the more frequent presence of a group of States in the Security Council. These criteria, which do not preclude others that might be proposed, have to do with contributions of military, police and civilian personnel to United Nations peacekeeping operations; financial contributions effectively paid to the Organization's budgets; and population levels. Logically, the criterion of equitable geographical distribution set out in Article 23, paragraph 1, of the Charter, would also be maintained. This would help bring about greater participation in the Council by all Member States and would establish a more equitable system than the one we have now and would make the Council more efficient. It would also be objective, and thus acceptable to all Member States.

At the same time, Spain introduced a specific proposal on the question of adapting the decision-making system in the Security Council. This proposal tried to combine the swiftness and flexibility needed in taking decisions that directly affect solutions to problems under consideration and the need to avoid taking hasty decisions with insufficient information or support from the parties concerned or the international community.

For these reasons, on the basis of the distinctions established in Article 27 of the Charter, Council decisions could be divided into three categories: procedural matters, which would be decided by an absolute majority; substantive matters not relating to Chapter VII, which would require a special majority, with no exercise of the right of veto; and substantive matters relating to Chapter VII, which would require the same special majority, but with the possibility of exercise of what is known as the right of veto.

In conclusion, the Working Group already has ample documentation and concrete proposals. We cannot yet say that there are areas on which decisions can be made, as the report before us shows.

However, the Working Group's report also shows wide support for certain proposals, such as the institutionalization of measures to improve the Council's working methods and transparency in its activities; the modification of the decision-making process; and the proposal by the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries that, in the absence of agreement on the increase of other categories of membership, expansion should take place only, for the time being, in the non-permanent category.

My delegation believes that the Working Group should continue its deliberations during this session to try to identify points of consensus, especially on those issues that have shown the greatest progress. In this context, I would like to assure the Assembly that the Spanish delegation will continue to participate actively in the work of the Working Group and will lend all necessary cooperation to the presidency so that we can move ahead towards consensus with the joint efforts of the entire international community.

I would like to reiterate that this process must seek the broadest possible support of Member States. This is the only way to guarantee the legitimacy of this reform. In my view, this objective is more important than mere haste. In a classic Spanish play, the main character says to his valet: "Dress me slowly. I'm in a hurry", which brings to mind the Latin proverb: "*Festina lente*" — hasten slowly. Some have compared this process to a moving train that we cannot miss. I agree, but it is

equally important not to leave behind on the platform the passengers who wish to continue participating in this common venture of all nations.

Mr. Rovenský (Czech Republic): The Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters has been active for the past three years. Its deliberations have attracted the wide attention of the Member States. Its discussions have been far-reaching and detailed. They have encompassed all aspects of Security Council work.

Many interesting proposals have emerged from this lively debate with regard to the future composition and working methods of the Council. They offer a rich selection to choose from and, as a next step, the Group should do just that. It should begin with the selection process. It is clear that many proposals, especially those aimed at improving the Security Council's working methods and transparency, have received wide support in the Working Group and, with the goodwill of all concerned, their adoption should not pose a major difficulty.

For practical reasons, let us separate proposals that would require Charter amendments from those that would not. Numerous delegations have voiced the view that many of the proposals aimed at improving the Security Council's working methods and transparency and its relationship with non-members of the Council and with other principal organs of the United Nations — proposals that have, by the way, enjoyed overwhelming support — could be implemented by means other than Charter amendments. They could therefore be adopted without unnecessary delay.

It is, in our view, desirable that the Open-ended Working Group submit recommendations concerning changes in the composition and working methods of the Security Council before the end of the fifty-first session of the General Assembly. This is an achievable goal.

Let me now briefly recapitulate the salient features of the Czech position on the reform of the Security Council. We support an increase in both permanent and non-permanent seats, while insisting on safeguarding rapid and effective Security Council action. We recognize that an inordinate increase in the number of permanent and non-permanent members would hinder the effectiveness of the Council. Therefore we advocate a modest expansion in both categories. We oppose new categories of Security Council membership under whatever guise they may be proposed.

The criteria for new permanent members of the Security Council should include, *inter alia*, their level of commitment to maintaining international peace, promoting development and meeting financial obligations towards the United Nations. We believe that Germany and Japan are suitable candidates and support expanded representation of Africa, Latin America and Asia.

As far as the reform of Security Council working methods is concerned, several proposals have been submitted, including the Czech proposal for a broader interpretation of Articles 31 and 32 of the Charter that would enable non-members of the Council to participate in its discussions. This proposal was elaborated further, especially by Argentina and New Zealand, and has received wide support from Member States. We hope that it will be included in the recommendations that the Open-ended Working Group will eventually submit to the General Assembly.

Finally, let me express my delegation's support for the report of the Open-ended Working Group, which we find to be a concise and accurate description of the activities of the Group at the fiftieth session of the General Assembly. We endorse the recommendations contained therein. We thank Ambassador Breitenstein of Finland and Ambassador Jayanama of Thailand for their excellent work as co-Vice-Chairmen and assure them of our continued support.

Mr. Nobilo (Croatia): At the outset, I would like to take this opportunity to convey my delegations's deep appreciation to the Vice-Chairmen of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council, Ambassador Breitenstein of Finland and Ambassador Jayanama of Thailand. They have steered the discussions of the Working Group in an excellent manner. Additionally, I would like to express my gratitude for the wise guidance of the previous Chairman of the Working Group, Ambassador Diogo Freitas do Amaral, and to wish Mr. Razali good luck in presiding over the deliberations of the Working Group.

Since the Security Council has primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, discussion of the composition and working methods of the Council is a matter of extreme importance

and gravity. Therefore, any recommendation or decision on this subject should only be made after careful and extensive deliberations that take into account the opinions and suggestions of the widest spectrum of United Nations Member States.

However, after some three years of deliberation on this matter in the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council, we have come to a crossroads, at which we had to decide whether these deliberations are to bear fruit or whether they have largely been for naught. We have to date heard a wide variety of opinion; further discussion without concrete proposals would be counter-productive and would only serve to shut the window of opportunity for carrying out meaningful reform. We must now look beyond narrow State interests and seize this opportunity to present concrete proposals and to try to build the necessary consensus in order to put them into effect.

In this regard my delegation believes that if agreement on all the issues concerning Security Council reform cannot be reached, then we should try to take action on those matters on which there is agreement. This relates especially to issues regarding the working methods of the Council. These issues should not be held hostage to other issues on which there is no wide-spread agreement. Matters regarding the working methods of the Council on which there is agreement should be presented as recommendations to the Security Council with a view to having them institutionalized.

There is almost unanimous opinion that the transparency of the Security Council needs to be increased. It should be noted that there have been recent improvements which have increased the transparency of the Council, such as the Council President's regular briefings to non-members of the Council. We wish to commend this initiative; however, it is our firm opinion that much more can be done in this regard.

My delegation is of the opinion that countries which host United Nations peacekeeping troops should participate in the meetings that the Security Council holds with troop-contributing countries. Croatia, as a troop-hosting country, believes that mutual benefit would be derived from such a policy. The Republic of Croatia also shares the view expressed by many States that Article 31 of the Charter of the United Nations should be interpreted in such a way as to allow United Nations Member States which are not members of the Security Council to participate in discussions during informal consultations of the Council on questions which directly affect them.

It would seem to us only fair that States which are directly affected by Security Council decisions should be able to present their positions at relevant meetings of the Council. In addition to that, an exchange of views between these States and members of the Security Council in the early phases of the decision-making process should lead to better mutual assessment of the situation in question. This would help the Council make better-informed decisions and would facilitate the implementation of those decisions.

In terms of the composition of the Security Council, the Republic of Croatia wishes to state once again that it favours an increase in both the permanent and the non-permanent categories of membership of the Council. The increase in size of the Council should not be such as to affect negatively the efficiency of the work of that body. Therefore, we are of the opinion that the total membership of the Council should not exceed 25, although we do not view this number as a non-negotiable limit, but rather as a general target.

Croatia believes that Germany and Japan, due to their firm adherence to democratic principles and to their active and valuable involvement in the interest of maintaining international peace and security, deserve to be permanent members of the Security Council.

My delegation also views favourably proposals that countries from Africa, Asia and Latin America should be among the permanent members of the Security Council, with possibly one permanent member from each of these three regions. Permanent membership for these regions should be considered not only in order to ensure equitable geographical distribution, but also because countries from these regions have significant political and economic influence and have played a constructive role in international affairs, including peacekeeping. Croatia would, of course, respect the decision reached by States from these regions as to how they would prefer to be better represented in the Council.

With regard to the duration of the terms of both new and present permanent members, my delegation believes that the adjective permanent should not be taken literally. We support the view that there should be a review mechanism, whereby the status of permanent members would be considered every 10 to 15 years.

It is difficult to discuss an increase in the permanent membership of the Security Council without at the same time reflecting on the power of the veto which the permanent members enjoy. The Republic of Croatia wishes to reiterate its general position that there should be a limitation of the right and exercise of the veto. However, since it is highly unlikely that the power of the veto will soon be abolished, the Republic of Croatia believes that the proposal to require at least two vetoes to be cast in order to nullify a Security Council resolution deserves serious consideration. This proposal would be even more appropriate in a Security Council with an increased number of permanent members. Additionally, it is our opinion that the scope of the veto should be limited only to enforcement measures under Chapter VII of the Charter.

My delegation also wishes to reiterate the need to keep the interests of small States in mind when considering the enlargement of the Security Council. We are of the opinion that a mechanism should be established by which small States would be guaranteed a voice in the Council through a balanced rotation of non-permanent seats, in keeping with the principle of the sovereign equality of States.

I wish to stress, in conclusion, that the time has come for us to formalize those recommendations on Security Council reform that have wide support among States Members of the United Nations. Future meetings of the Working Group dealing with the reform of the Security Council need to focus on this matter. We are at the point where the repetition by Member States of established and well-known positions serves no useful purpose. Rather, the time has come to act, lest we risk losing the present opportunity.

Sir John Weston (United Kingdom): It is three years since we started this present exercise of enlarging the Security Council: three years during which we have discussed the issues fully, clarified the key concepts, and developed innovative proposals to enhance the Council. It is three years also in which the Council, partly in response to the suggestions of the General Assembly and the Working Group, has improved its own working methods, enhanced its transparency to the benefit of non-members, and strengthened its links to troop contributors. It is also three years in which, despite our agreement on the need for enlargement, and despite the commitments made at the fiftieth anniversary celebrations, we have yet to enlarge the Security Council, an enlargement which is, after all, the objective of the Working Group's mandate.

The positions of Member States on the issues before us are now clear. We have before us many interesting proposals, including those of Tunisia and Norway, which could be developed further. As the British Foreign Secretary, Malcolm Rifkind, indicated in the general debate, the time has come to move from the discussion of principles to the discussion of proposals, and from repetition of well-known points to serious negotiations. Another year of general debate will not help us; nor will it help the United Nations.

I venture to assert that we already have a wide measure of agreement in the General Assembly on the manner in which we should enlarge the Council: first, certain countries, by virtue of their political, economic and diplomatic weight, deserve to be offered permanent membership of the Council. We welcome the wide support offered in this respect to Japan and Germany, here in the Assembly debate and also in the Working Group.

Secondly, there is agreement that the representation of developing countries in the Council should be enhanced.

Thirdly, there is agreement that the process of organic, evolutionary change in the Council's working methods, which has enhanced its transparency, should continue.

Above all, the Council must remain effective and efficient, able to react quickly and decisively to threats to international peace and security. That, for us at least, means that the Council must remain of a workable size, and that any enlargement must be kept modest to, say, 20 or 21 seats. The Council is and must continue to be an action-orientated body, not a debating club, not a parliament, not a recreation of the General Assembly.

In closing, I pay tribute to the work of Ambassador Breitenstein and Ambassador Jayanama, the co-Vice-Chairmen of the Working Group, and to their efforts, both formal and informal, to move our discussions forward. We also pay tribute to the President of the General Assembly and to his own personal commitment to the cause of reform. We pledge to work with him and with the co-Vice-Chairmen for an early and successful conclusion to our work to give us a modern, effective Security Council fit for the new millennium.

I would end with a footnote. While we should not judge countries' contributions to the United Nations

solely by their budgetary contributions, it is important that we stick to the facts. Therefore, despite what one of my colleagues suggested yesterday in this debate, let me place again on record that the United Kingdom is and expects to remain the fifth largest financial contributor to the assessed budgets of this Organization, currently paying 5.32 per cent on the regular budget and 6.6 per cent on the peacekeeping budget scale. Any delegation requiring confirmation of this can easily obtain it from our colleagues in the Secretariat.

Mr. Gnehm (United States of America): The United States is very pleased to contribute to today's debate on agenda item 47, "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters".

Discussion in the Open-ended Working Group, under the guidance of our two very able co-Vice-Chairmen, has proven very useful. Although final consensus continues to elude the Working Group, there have been some important accomplishments this year. In its report to the General Assembly, the Working Group reaffirmed its agreement to explore ways of reforming the Security Council in a manner which

> "strengthens its capacity and effectiveness, enhances its representative character and improves its working efficiency". (*A/50/47, para. 16*)

In this vein, discussions in the Working Group again demonstrated that many delegations share the United States view that permanent membership for Germany and Japan is a *sine qua non* of Security Council reform. The overwhelming support Japan received in the vote for a non-permanent seat for the 1997-1998 term clearly underscores the appreciation of the international community for Japan's record of constructive global influence and its capacity to sustain heavy global responsibilities. Germany has demonstrated similarly impressive global leadership during the time it has served on the Security Council. Japan and Germany would both be valuable new permanent members whose contributions would strengthen the Council; indeed, I must emphasize that the United States could not agree to a Council enlargement that did not entail their permanent membership.

The United States would also accept a modest expansion of the Council beyond permanent seats for Germany and Japan, while keeping firmly in mind the need to maintain the Council's working efficiency. We do not wish to destroy the Council in the process of attempting to enhance it. Beyond Germany and Japan, additional membership remains a substantial question. While the United States takes no position on how other seats might be apportioned, we believe the total size of the Council should not exceed about 20 members.

Moreover, we would not agree to any change in the status, powers and obligations of the current permanent members, all of which are countries with global political and economic influence and a capacity to contribute to peace and security through concrete measures on a global basis.

Discussion in the Working Group has touched upon broadening participation in the Council by developing countries. A new and interesting element in the discussion this year was the introduction of creative proposals by a number of delegations concerning the concept of permanent regional rotational seats. This concept, in our opinion, is both positive and constructive, and deserves careful consideration; we certainly hope the Working Group will explore it further.

We remain committed to openness, transparency, responsiveness and dialogue between the Council and non-members. In fact, the Council has shown itself to be more flexible in adapting its working methods to achieving these goals than perhaps any other United Nations body. This year, many more open debates were held on issues of wide interest prior to Security Council consideration of the respective subjects. The daily Council agenda was published with greater detail than ever before. Troop contributors' meetings continued to be held, with special emphasis on doing so before Council consideration of actions on peacekeeping mandates. The Presidents of the Council have also sought regularly to brief Member States on Council deliberations, and we certainly did so quite frequently during our presidency. We remain open, as the need arises, to consideration of further procedural changes to enhance the Council's transparency and efficiency.

We welcome the strong interest which the President of the General Assembly has demonstrated in the issue of Council expansion and reform, and we also welcome his stewardship as the Working Group's Chairman.

Mr. Erwa (Sudan) (*interpretation from Arabic*): At the outset, I should like to thank the officers of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the

Security Council for their efforts, which are reflected in the report before us. We should also like to thank the Secretariat for facilitating the work of the Working Group.

Reform of our international Organization, and specifically the Security Council and its working methods, is an issue on which all the States Members of the United Nations agree, because the Security Council continues to play a role that affects many matters of interest to the international community and peoples throughout the world. My delegation therefore believes that the efforts to reform the Council should proceed from the principles of the United Nations Charter, most important among them the principle of the sovereign equality of States.

Mr. Azwai (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The Charter is the standard by which all calls to reform the Council should be measured. In its work, the Council should conform to the principles of the Charter.

All previous speakers have reaffirmed the need for the Security Council to work in a more transparent and equitable manner. They have said that its membership should truly reflect the principle of democracy. The Charter states that the Security Council acts on behalf of the Members of the United Nations, and they in turn expect this to be reflected in the resolutions the Council adopts. It is regrettable that the actual situation in the Council is otherwise. The activities of the Security Council have been characterized by cloaks and daggers, and by secret meetings. Its resolutions lack justice and objectivity, and have become a battleground for the settling of accounts between some Council members and other States. The Security Council has been exploited. It has become an instrument to punish States and peoples, even though the Charter provides that the Security Council should be used to settle disputes by peaceful means.

My delegation believes that the first priority in reforming the Council is to make it more representative of the world's current reality. The Security Council was set up in 1945, when the United Nations had 51 Members. At that time, the Council numbered 11 members. The reality of the world situation in 1963 — with the membership of the United Nations reaching 112 States — dictated an increase in the size of the Council to 15 members. Today the membership of our Organization is 185. Therefore, the membership of the Council should be increased in a just manner which takes into consideration that all previously colonized States are now independent, fully sovereign States with the right to participate in decision-making and in the maintenance of international peace and security.

In this regard my delegation agrees with the Malaysian proposal for an increase in the membership of the Council on a regional basis, with each region choosing its representative according to set criteria. In this way, the primary role of those States would be to represent their regions. Such a proposal, which would put an end to the practices of some States, which seem to believe that their membership in the Council is an honour attaching to them alone, and which do not even bother to consult with other States of the region they represent.

In seeking to obtain greater transparency in the Council's activities, we should review the Council's tendency to hold many informal meetings during which items are considered and draft resolutions formulated, and then to take these draft resolutions to formal meetings which are merely official occasions to read out the previously agreed-upon decisions. My delegation would support the proposal to apply Article 31 of the Charter to informal meetings of the Security Council, in order to allow States concerned with an issue before the Council to participate in informal meetings of the Council on that issue — thereby achieving justice and equality for all parties to the dispute.

My delegation also reaffirms the need for further and wider consultation between members of the Security Council and all the other Members of the United Nations, in particular when the Council is considering action under Chapter VII of the Charter. Such expanded consultations are needed because resolutions involving such action have effects that go far beyond the States concerned, affecting entire regions and sometimes areas beyond them as well.

My delegation believes that, as part of the reform of the Security Council, there is a need to promote and improve the relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly, especially when Chapter VII is involved. This is because the General Assembly has wider representation, and because many aspects of Chapter VII fall within its purview.

My delegation also calls for promoting better relations between the Security Council and regional organizations. We believe that the Council should expand its efforts to seek the opinions of both the General Assembly and regional organizations, in particular on matters involving Chapter VI and when peaceful solutions

to disputes are being sought as a way of maintaining international peace and security.

My delegation believes that the Security Council should limit itself to political and security issues. It should not take up legal issues, which fall under the purview and mandate of the International Court of Justice.

The veto power was dictated by conditions which no longer prevail in our world. It is no secret that the veto runs counter to the Charter principle of equality among States. It runs counter to the principle of a democratic organization. Proceeding from this, my delegation calls for the abolition of the veto. This would be a means for achieving justice and equality in the activities of the Organization and of the Security Council in particular.

Calls for democracy must not be used to impose double standards and selectivity. If our intentions in this regard are genuine, we must all commit ourselves to serving, in deeds and in words, the principles of democracy.

In conclusion, my delegation believes that the Working Group has not achieved the desired progress because some countries insisted on maintaining their privileges. We call on the Working Group to accelerate its activities to achieve its objectives so that the Council can no longer be used as an instrument in the hands of some to punish others, to impose double standards and to be selective in the drafting and implementation of resolutions.

Mr. Wisnumurti (Indonesia): The Indonesian delegation looks forward to working with closely with Mr. Razali, when, as President of the fifty-first session of the General Assembly, he will preside over the deliberations of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council. We would also like to avail ourselves of this opportunity to extend our felicitations to the two Vice-Chairmen of the Working Group on their re-election.

At the outset, my delegation wishes to associate itself fully with the statement delivered by Colombia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, which stressed the importance attached to this question and the urgent need for democracy and transparency in the Council's functioning.

To the credit of Member States, it must be said that since the initiation of deliberations in the Working Group mandated to consider the question of an expansion of the Security Council and related matters, earnest endeavours have been made to resolve the large number of contentious issues. This was made possible to a great extent by the submission of proposals which have contributed to a better appreciation of the diverse positions that prevail among us. In turn, this has laid a solid basis for further work towards the reform and revitalization of the Security Council, which we all agree is long overdue and cannot be postponed indefinitely. Yet our future direction is far from clear and self-evident, due primarily to the interplay of a complex set of factors and policies that have not always been conducive or responsive to the legitimate demands and expectations of our times.

It is therefore pertinent to ask how long the international community can countenance the present untenable status quo; what the reasoning is behind the stated preference of some Members for the present state of affairs over changes in the composition of the Security Council and its decision-making processes; and whether we are genuinely committed to a Council that would reflect the undeniable realities of the contemporary world.

It is clear that success in our endeavours to revamp and to revitalize the Security Council will be elusive if the key issue of an increase in permanent membership is not accorded the consideration that it warrants. Regrettably, this question has often been portrayed, erroneously in our view, as leading to the expansion of an exclusive club and to the creation of new centres of power and new regimes of privilege without responsibility. However, new permanent members from developing countries would be committed to dispelling such misperceptions by assuming the onerous obligations inherent in such a status, especially in respect of maintaining international peace and security. Thus, insulated from power politics, they would be committed to safeguarding the collective interests of the global community. They would accord priority to resolving conflicts through dialogue and negotiations — the use of force being the last resort. They would seek a democratic process of decision-making through consultations with the parties involved in disputes and other interested countries, and would thereby enhance channels of communication. They would act impartially and objectively to ensure that the Council's decisions were based on fairness, equity and consistency. And they would endeavour to establish a joint working relationship with the General Assembly and other bodies, and would seek to involve the

membership at large more closely in the work of the Council.

It should also be acknowledged that some of the developing countries seeking permanent membership have earned their rightful place through manifold contributions to the purposes and objectives of the United Nations, especially in the field of security and peacekeeping, and because of political and economic realities, proven competence in conflict prevention and resolution, the promotion of regional harmony and the building of an edifice of confidence and concord.

In our view, the Security Council can no longer remain stagnant and unresponsive to the changed and changing milieu of the contemporary era. The time has therefore come to move away from anachronisms inherited from the past, to seek changes in conformity with the passage of time and the evolution of events, and to introduce a new balance in the composition of the Council.

In this regard, Indonesia believes that an increase in the permanent category should reflect the will and interests of the developing countries in conformity with the present realities and the changed international context. Consequently, an increase that failed to include non-aligned and developing countries would be inequitable, would further widen the chasm between these States and the developed nations, and would not redress the geographical imbalance that already exists. It is pertinent to note that, contrary to some assertions, none of the developed States seeking permanent membership can be said to have received endorsement at both the regional and the global levels.

My delegation deems it essential that concerted efforts should continue towards resolving the question of new permanent members under a comprehensive expansion package that would also include non-permanent members. A partial solution to this question in utter disregard of the need for a comprehensive package would seriously undermine our endeavours for a more balanced, representative and legitimate Security Council, and would hence be unacceptable.

My delegation is already on record as having expressed its doubts and reservations concerning new types or categories of membership in the Security Council for the ostensible purpose of providing increased opportunities for an undefined group of States. These proposals are fraught with serious ambiguities, are of doubtful efficacy and practicability, and would unduly restrict the scope and dimension of the reform process.

The concept of regionalism in particular would deprive the General Assembly of its jurisdiction in electing members. The credentials of candidates should be open for scrutiny by the wider membership. Regional representation would fuel irritants that have so far been submerged in the broader interests of regional amity. It might even sharpen regional animosities where they exist. Further compounding the problem is the question of reconciling national and regional interests and the practicability of designating one or two countries, given the diversity and plurality of organizations in some regions in terms of capabilities, political inclinations, and economic and social factors. We should not confuse the concept of regionalism enshrined in Chapter VIII of the Charter with the concept of regional representation in the Security Council, as they have distinct characteristics and implications. Hence, the regional approach would not substantively ameliorate the current inequities and imbalances in the Security Council.

Indonesia has consistently supported an appropriate increase in the non-permanent category in view of the dramatically expanded membership of the United Nations. Such an increase, based on the guiding principle of equitable geographical representation, has become imperative as under-representation is incompatible with the ongoing process of democratization.

With regard to the working methods and practices of the Security Council, the changes that have been introduced have had the beneficial impact of enhancing the relationship between the Council and the general membership. We have noted in particular the briefings by the President of the Security Council to non-members of the Council; meetings between the members of the Council and troop-contributing countries; consultations between the President of the Council and Member States interested in disputes which are under consideration by the Council; and more frequent formal meetings of the Security Council to address specific situations or issues of importance to the international community.

While many of these procedures and practices constitute encouraging developments, their importance has been magnified; they are far from meeting the requirements of transparency, accountability and democratization. Thus, what it has been possible to achieve are improvements of a marginal nature that do not address the core issues. Hence, there is still a long

road to travel. Much more needs to be done, particularly in institutionalizing many of these procedures and practices.

An adequate working relationship between permanent and non-permanent members has long been acknowledged to be an essential prerequisite for the Council's effectiveness. In both formal sessions and informal consultations, non-permanent members have made positive contributions in promoting the peaceful resolution of conflicts. Thus, the permanent and the non-permanent members collectively share a sacred trust and act on behalf of the other Members of the Organization. This should be buttressed by a constructive search for consensus on difficult and controversial issues.

Finally, as regards the question of veto, Indonesia has associated itself with the position of the Non-Aligned Movement, as submitted by Egypt in March 1996. Its retention would erode the trust and confidence of the Member States in the integrity and objectivity of the Security Council. The principles of equity, equality and legitimacy also call for its elimination. Its exercise, which ensures an exclusive and dominant role for a few powerful nations, is also incompatible with the ongoing endeavours to reform the decision-making processes of the Security Council.

In conclusion, Indonesia deems it essential for the Working Group to continue its endeavours in fulfilling the task entrusted to it by the General Assembly. We therefore support the recommendation contained in its report for a continuation of its work during the fifty-first session of the General Assembly. Considering the critical issues that impinge on the vital interests of all Member States, my delegation urges caution rather than hasty decisions, in view of the ramifications for the future of the Security Council.

Mr. Didi (Maldives): Our Foreign Minister has conveyed to His Excellency Mr. Razali Ismail the formal congratulations of the delegation of Maldives on his election to the post of President of the General Assembly at its fifty-first session. However, as this is the first time that I am speaking in plenary, I wish to add my own congratulations on his well-deserved election to this high post. Speaking for the Maldives delegation, I am happy to assure the President of our full cooperation. We extend our wholehearted support to the effective manner in which our proceedings are being conducted.

The Maldives is glad to have been among the 10 Member States whose request in 1979 led to the original inclusion in the agenda of the General Assembly of the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council. Seventeen years have passed since its introduction. However, it was only in 1992 that the General Assembly decided to initiate action under this item. Since then, many different views have been expressed by States Members of this Organization under this roof as well as by interested individuals elsewhere. Today, the question of increase in the membership of the Security Council has gained the momentum it deserves.

We fully realize that any change in the composition of the Security Council will also necessitate the consideration of several other matters, including the necessary amendments to the Charter, the role of the veto as at present and the decision-making process of the Council. Similarly, the issues relating to permanent membership, transparency in the work of the Council and the relationship between the Council and the General Assembly are equally important areas that concern the membership of this Organization — viewed, perhaps, from different angles by various countries and groups of countries. How to achieve "equitable representation" itself is a delicate issue because its interpretation is likely to be different among Members, even in the same geographical group.

The task is a formidable one. The Maldives delegation appreciates deeply the untiring efforts of the Open-ended Working Group since its establishment in 1993 to put together all the components that make up the issue. We would like to see the process result in reform that would make the Security Council more representative, democratic and transparent. We would be reluctant to see the United Nations become a corporate body in which only the rich and powerful decide issues. The world has changed, opening up numerous opportunities and formidable challenges. The time is propitious to enhance and to reinvigorate the principles of sovereign equality and fair participation enshrined in the Charter.

Many heads of delegations have expressed their views on this subject during the general debate. Some have endorsed, or aligned themselves with, the proposals put forward by others. None of them seem to disagree that there is an urgent need today to reform the Security Council. However, as the General Assembly took up consideration of this item more than a decade since its inscription on the agenda, we do not feel that its urgency should now cause it to be dealt with hastily, at the cost of

the intended results. Nevertheless, my delegation does not wish to see the discussions on reform prolonged, for the momentum of the reform process cannot be maintained indefinitely. While what reality dictates cannot be ignored, discussions must be continued until consensus has been reached on all important aspects. These should include the basis of rotation of non-permanent members and fair representation of all Members of this Organization, taking into account in particular the interests of less advantaged and small States such as my own. It is we who have to turn to the Security Council for our security. It is for countries such as ours, for whom, if I may quote our Foreign Minister,

> "the United Nations is extremely important in safeguarding our sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity". (*Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-first Session, Plenary Meetings, 27th Meeting, p. 7*)

In conclusion, my delegation would like to stress that although we have not been able to actively participate in the proceedings of the Working Group, we would like to commend the Chairman and the two Vice-Chairmen for their perseverance and dedication towards producing a formula acceptable to all. We would also like to appeal to them, and to those Members that are most active in the Working Group, to be mindful of the concerns of all States, including smaller ones, as the Group proceeds with the reform discussions in the spirit of enhancing legitimacy and democratic values within the United Nations in general and within the Security Council in particular.

Mr. Buallay (Bahrain) (*interpretation from Arabic*): Since the creation of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council, as provided for in resolution 48/26 of the General Assembly of 3 December 1993, many positive steps have been taken that can guide us in defining the main parameters of this important issue. Many opinions and proposals have been deliberated upon during the Working Group's meetings. We also note that the Security Council itself has taken many steps to improve its working methods and procedures.

The stated views of States during the past period indicate near unanimity on the need to improve United Nations bodies, including the Security Council, the Organization's nerve centre, in order to increase their effectiveness and representative character. These opinions were crystallized in the historic Declaration on the Occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations adopted on 24 October 1995, when Member States and observers committed themselves to a United Nations for the twenty-first century, equipped and financed to enable it to render effective service to the peoples on whose behalf it was established. The Declaration stated that:

> "The Security Council should, *inter alia*, be expanded and its working methods continue to be reviewed in a way that will further strengthen its capacity and effectiveness, enhance its representative character and improve its working efficiency and transparency." *(resolution 50/6)*

The Declaration reflected the desire of the international community to review the activities of the Security Council 50 years after the birth of the international Organization. All issues that have arisen and events that have taken place on the international scene since the creation of the United Nations must be taken into consideration, particularly the important changes in international relations and the considerable increase in the membership of the United Nations. We should define a new concept for the twenty-first century which would take these new conditions into account and would be commensurate with them.

Any observer of the activities of the Working Group will note agreement among all States on the need to expand the Security Council membership in the light of the considerable increase in the membership of the United Nations, which grew from 51 Members in 1945 to 185 today. It is necessary now to ensure wider participation, and the opportunity to participate in Security Council deliberations as members must be given to all States.

It would be desirable for the expansion of the Security Council not to compromise effectiveness or efficiency in the Council's work. Therefore, this issue must be studied very carefully in order to strike a balance between increasing membership on the one hand and effectiveness on the other.

My delegation views with satisfaction the measures already adopted by the Security Council to improve its working methods and procedures. These include briefing non-members of the Security Council on Council deliberations and discussions. These issues are of interest to all States. We hope that the Council will continue this policy of openness — perhaps by publishing a monthly programme of work and by holding as many open

meetings as possible. We recently witnessed such a trend, when the Council held open meetings to consider a number of urgent issues, and thus enabled non-members to contribute to its debates. In addition, we believe that further statements from the Council would be of benefit to all.

The Working Group's report to the General Assembly indicates that the Group took up the following five essential issues: the working methods of the Security Council; the size and composition of the Council; decision-making in the Council, including the veto; amendments to the Charter; and periodic review of membership and Security Council activities. These are very important and complicated issues, as shown by the many proposals put forward by Member States, some of which conflicted with, if not actually contradicted, others.

The substantive deliberations and consultations of the Working Group showed the following. First of all, the issue is multi-faceted, because of the many details that have to be taken up. It is not limited solely to membership and other related issues as it would seem at first glance. Secondly, there is currently a balance in the membership of the Security Council which took many years to achieve. It would be difficult to change that balance without an alternative that was acceptable to all. Thirdly, the Working Group with its current membership cannot effectively take up all aspects of the issue unless subgroups are created to take up each element individually.

In the light of the experience of the Working Group to date, it is clear that the most important factor for the Group is time, as well as the trust of Member States. Member States must be patient; this is not an easy subject to deal with in a short period of time. We therefore believe that the Assembly should adopt a draft resolution renewing the Working Group until the next session, as has been proposed.

Proceeding from its belief in the central role of the Security Council in the maintenance of international peace and security, and from its belief in the importance of giving an opportunity to all Member States to participate in the Council, the State of Bahrain has put forward its candidature for membership of the Security Council for the period 1998-1999. Bahrain hopes to contribute to the implementation of the tenets and principles of the United Nations, and we hope the international community will support our candidature.

Mr. Gorita (Romania): For the third consecutive session, the General Assembly is examining the agenda item entitled "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters". The work done since the last session, particularly the inter-sessional consultations under the able guidance of Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral, President of the fiftieth session of the General Assembly, and the decisive contribution of the two Vice-Chairmen, Ambassador Breitenstein of Finland and Ambassador Jayanama of Thailand, has been conducive to important clarifications on matters such as the lines of convergence that exist and major differences which still remain, as reflected in the report of the Open-ended Working Group on this subject.

The report of the Working Group, so carefully negotiated and pondered, may not necessarily reflect the considerable efforts put into this crucial endeavour throughout the year. But the report definitely offers a useful basis for future consultations and negotiations, to which we are all committed, because now we have a clear picture of what is and what is not acceptable to Member States.

My delegation closely followed the debates of the Open-ended Working Group on Security Council reform and offered its own contributions to that work.

From the very beginning of this exercise, we have seen this vital issue for the United Nations membership from both the perspective of equitable representation in and enlargement of the Security Council and from that of developing additional measures and procedures for its working methods within the existing framework of the United Nations Charter. Such an endeavour is closely interrelated with the whole process of United Nations reform and adaptation to present and, more importantly, future challenges.

From the inception of our own work on this issue, my country offered a set of comments and suggestions in its official reply, in accordance with resolution 47/62.

At the same time, the process of consultations, which identified a core of ideas, made us more aware of the complexity, special interests and, consequently, the difficulties of finding a solution that is both equitable and pragmatic. As for the results achieved so far, it is definite and particularly positive that important efforts — in terms of measures and procedures within the existing framework of the United Nations Charter and the United

Nations Security Council rules of procedure — have been initiated and are currently under way. They concern the improvement of the work of the Security Council in terms of transparency, greater openness to the entire membership, and its relationship and interaction with other United Nations organs, especially with the General Assembly and with peacekeeping operations. The Security Council has already taken initiatives and put into practice some ideas and measures resulting from the extensive process of consultations related to the so-called Cluster II issues. Thus, a genuine process of interaction in this area was initiated and is currently under way. The United Nations Security Council itself took some positive initiatives, welcomed afterwards by the Open-ended Working Group.

The issue of the enlargement of the Security Council membership is proving to be far more complicated. As for the ways and means of realizing the imperative of ensuring a larger and more equitable representation of the membership of the Security Council, Romania, at the very beginning of this exercise, pointed out that any change in the composition of the Council must necessarily provide the most favourable conditions for the Council to perform its responsibilities under the United Nations Charter, while maintaining and even increasing its efficiency. On that occasion, the Romanian Government supported a moderate increase in the composition of the Security Council. We encourage the efforts to reach an agreement and we favour increasing the membership of the Council up to a total of 25.

With regard to the eligibility criteria for membership in the Security Council, we consider that, in general, the provisions of Article 23, paragraph 1, of the United Nations Charter, namely the contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security, as well as equitable geographical distribution, are still valid. The first one justifies the importance given in the debates of the Working Group to the specific contribution of every State to United Nations peacekeeping operations and related activities. Our delegation does not consider that a special debate is necessary to discuss in detail the Charter's provisions with regard to multiple criteria and their possible classification for assessing a Member State's capacity to exercise its mandate as a Security Council member.

For these reasons, we continue to believe that Germany and Japan could be considered legitimate candidates for the Council's permanent membership category.

At the same time, in the spirit of equitable representation, the possibility of permanent membership should also be open to countries in developing regions in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Regarding the proposals submitted for the non-permanent member category, we think that the Italian initiative reflects genuine and legitimate interests and concerns, and suggests a flexible approach that merits examination. We also consider that in assessing the distribution of new seats for elected members in the Security Council, the balanced representation of all regional groups of the General Assembly should be taken into consideration. Romania reiterates the legitimate need to ensure at least one additional seat for the Group of Eastern European States, which, in the last few years, has more than doubled its membership.

Our responsibility for ensuring a more representative and stronger United Nations Security Council in the future is particularly important for the overall process of United Nations reform. That is why our delegation considers that a sense of urgency should prevail in our work. We have to make more tangible, practical progress on this crucial issue in the near future.

Finally, I should like to reaffirm my delegation's spirit of openness and its full cooperation in the efforts to achieve the anticipated results.

Mr. Maximov (Bulgaria): On behalf of the delegation of the Republic of Bulgaria, I should like to express our sincere appreciation of the fact that the President will be guiding the deliberations of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council during the current session of the General Assembly. We share the expectations of previous speakers that under his able guidance and with the assistance of the two Vice-Chairmen, Ambassador Breitenstein of Finland and Ambassador Jayanama of Thailand, the Working Group will achieve concrete results in 1997.

Bulgaria shares the view that the ongoing discussion on the reform of the Security Council in the framework of the Open-ended Working Group is of supreme importance to the future of the United Nations. We continue to offer our support and contribution to this important exercise. It is our strong belief that, in the spirit of cooperation, it will be possible to reach

consensus solutions, enabling the Security Council to meet the challenges of modern times in a most effective manner.

An increase in the membership of the Security Council should be directed at enhancing its capabilities in the discharge of its duty to maintain international peace and security. We support the search for an appropriate balance between the need to increase the membership of the Council due to the growth in United Nations membership over the past few years and the need to ensure effectiveness and efficiency in its work. In this process, it is indispensable to ensure that the number of non-permanent members is increased in a manner that will maintain both the ratio between permanent and non-permanent members and a broadly representative proportion among the regional groups. In this context, we are studying carefully all proposals, including the one put forward by Italy, that aim to change the principles of rotation of non-permanent seats; of the right of veto; and of the so-called enemy States, which results from the Second World War, as well as other ideas that could serve as a basis for reaching consensus.

In practical terms, this should ensure that States carrying considerable weight in the international political and economic arena — Germany and Japan for example — as well other influential countries in regional and global terms, could assume the responsibility of permanent status in the Security Council. An additional non-permanent seat should be designated for the Group of Eastern European States. It would be appropriate to recall once again that this regional group has more than doubled its membership since the last enlargement of the Council in 1965, while the overall number of the United Nations Member States has increased by about 50 per cent over the same period.

We greatly appreciate the steps taken by the Security Council towards improving its working methods, aimed at increasing transparency and at the wider involvement of non-member States. This pace should be maintained also by devising mechanisms for considering the positions of States concerned with an issue, and of neighbouring countries, at an early stage of the decision-making process. Possible contributions by regional organizations or mechanisms should also be considered in arriving at an adequate settlement.

Consultations are necessary when the Council is discussing the imposition of economic sanctions. It appears to be a widely supported view that increasing the transparency of the functioning of Security Council sanctions committees should also be continued.

In conclusion, I wish to assure the Assembly that my country is sincerely committed to contributing actively to the important process of reshaping the world Organization to be better able to meet the challenges of our age. Without any doubt, the reform of the Security Council is a major element of this joint effort.

Mr. Ngo Quang Xuan (Viet Nam): As the fifty-first session of the General Assembly comes immediately after the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, the emphasis on striving for more rapid reform is natural. This session is therefore immensely significant, and we will have to work even harder to achieve the targets we have set in our reform effort, lest we lose the precious momentum of that event. We are truly encouraged by the determination expressed by the President of the Assembly to push forward the reform process. I should also like to express the high appreciation of my delegation to the two Vice-Chairmen of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council, Ambassadors Asda Jayanama of Thailand and Wilhelm Breitenstein of Finland, for their great efforts in contributing to the advancement of our tasks.

In order to play its role and to function adequately, the United Nations must be drastically reformed to enhance representative values and to democratize and make transparent the working procedures. The key to democratizing the whole system is to reform the Security Council and to enhance the authority of the General Assembly. This is a very complex and difficult task that requires utmost caution and perseverance.

The General Assembly needs to be revitalized so that it can enjoy the highest authority within the system. This body is truly the most representative of all United Nations organs. Only when it can operate as the most powerful body, giving guidance to other parts of the system — including the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and the various United Nations funds and programmes — can we achieve a democratic United Nations. This achievement would enable us to reduce the current abuse of power by a minority of countries and would enhance respect for the most fundamental principle of the United Nations Charter: the principle of sovereign equality.

The vast changes in the international political scene over the past few years have made reform of the United Nations bodies, and the Security Council in particular, a

necessity. The expansion of Council membership is now an urgent demand. The membership of the Council is now so at odds with the growth of the general membership of the United Nations and with geo-economic and geo-political realities that the legitimacy of the decisions of the Council is in jeopardy. The Security Council depends for its effectiveness on the commitment and contribution of Member countries, so it is essential that it engage in genuine joint decision-making if its moral legitimacy is to be retained.

We share the view expressed by various delegations that the task of reforming the Security Council is one of the most crucial and difficult parts of our comprehensive reform platform. Although the majority of the United Nations membership can agree on the indisputable need to renew the working methods and the structure of the Council, including a reasonable enlargement of its membership, it is still very hard for Member countries to agree on ways to achieve these aspirations. We are afraid that this task will take a lot more time and energy than most of us expected. However, the task cannot be shelved if the United Nations is to be turned into a true democratic instrument in the service of all Member countries.

We agree that there are now certain differences of opinion amongst Member countries, particularly with regard to how the Security Council should be expanded. However, we believe that a moderate addition to both permanent and non-permanent seats on the Council would win much more support from a large majority of Member countries. We have always laid emphasis on the need to give additional seats to the developing countries so as to redress the current imbalance in representation in the Council. Reform of the Security Council must accommodate the genuine interests and concerns of the developing countries, which form the overwhelming majority of the Organization.

In our view, the criteria for new permanent members should be equitable geographical representation, political and economic strength, and the commitment and capability to contribute to the purposes of the United Nations — namely, the promotion of peace, security and development, both globally and regionally. The most important consideration is that reform must be undertaken on the basis of the agreed principles, in particular the principle of consensus, so that it reflects to the fullest degree the common aspirations and expectations of the vast majority of Member States and the interests and concerns of all geographic regions.

Various proposals have been put forward, including those of Tunisia and other African countries, Belize, Norway, Italy, Malaysia and many other countries. Our delegation believes that these proposals deserve serious consideration and study by Member countries. True consensus may be obtained through our determination to build upon these premises. Negotiations always demand determination, flexibility, compromise and respect for the genuine interests and concerns of all parties involved. The work of the Working Group on this subject must be further enhanced.

Our delegation is confident that the United Nations will be able to arrive at a suitable resolution of this issue that is acceptable to all countries and peoples. We need to accelerate our efforts to this end, but a hasty deadline should not be imposed.

Once again, we wish to express support for the working paper introduced by the Non-Aligned Movement with respect to the veto power and the democratization of the decision-making procedures of the Security Council.

In conclusion, I should like to reiterate that since the last review of the composition of the membership of the Security Council was undertaken over a quarter of a century ago, the enlargement of the Council has become long overdue. We must therefore exert every effort to turn that body into a truly democratic tool that can represent the overall membership of the United Nations. Concrete measures to replace the current rhetoric are urgently called for. The future of the United Nations itself is at stake if we cannot break the deadlock on this crucial issue.

The Acting President (*interpretation from Arabic*): There are no further speakers in the debate on this item for this meeting.

I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

May I remind members that, in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and five minutes for the second and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Ferrarin (Italy): In relation to the statement this afternoon by the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom, in which he referred to a point in the statement made by my Ambassador yesterday regarding

the scale of contributions, I would like to point out the following. The Permanent Representative of Italy, in his statement yesterday spoke of:

> "the emergence of a group of countries with considerable economic and political capacities, including Italy, which by 1 January 1998 will be the fifth largest contributor to the United Nations budget" *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-first Session, Plenary Meetings, 44th meeting, p. 11)*

This point made by the Permanent Representative of Italy is based on a United Nations document, WGFS/19 of 21 June 1995, which gives estimated figures for the scale of assessments as of 1 January 1998.

Mr. Manley (United Kingdom): I just wish to note that I believe the document in question refers to the European Union proposals on reform of the scale of assessments, a worthy objective in itself. I think, as my Permanent Representative stated earlier, we were referring both to the scale of assessments for the regular budget and to that for the peacekeeping budget. Under that scale of assessment, even under the European Union proposals the United Kingdom would continue to be the fifth largest contributor to the United Nations, and very proud of it.

Mr. Turnquest (Bahamas), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Programme of work

The Acting President: I should like to announce some additions to the programme of work of the General Assembly which appears in document A/INF/51/3/Rev.1/Add.1.

I should like to inform members that on Tuesday, 12 November, in the morning, the Assembly will consider agenda item 56, entitled "The situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina", as the second item. On Thursday, 14 November, in the morning, the Assembly will consider agenda item 42, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity", as the fourth item. On Wednesday, 20 November, in the morning, the Assembly will consider agenda item 41, entitled "Support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies". The lists of speakers for these items are now open.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.